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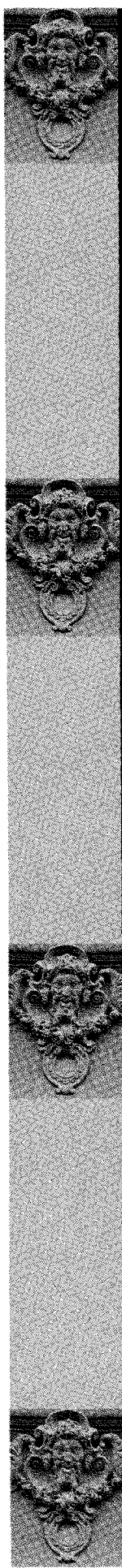
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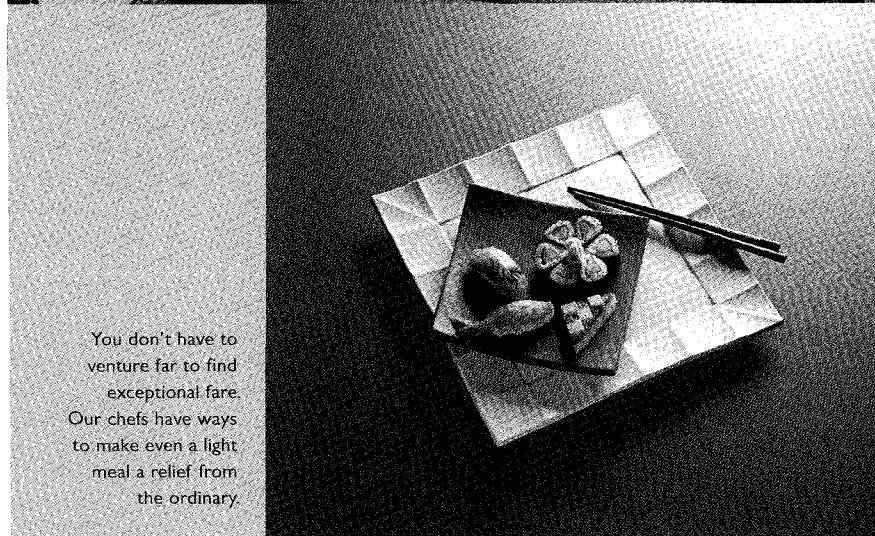


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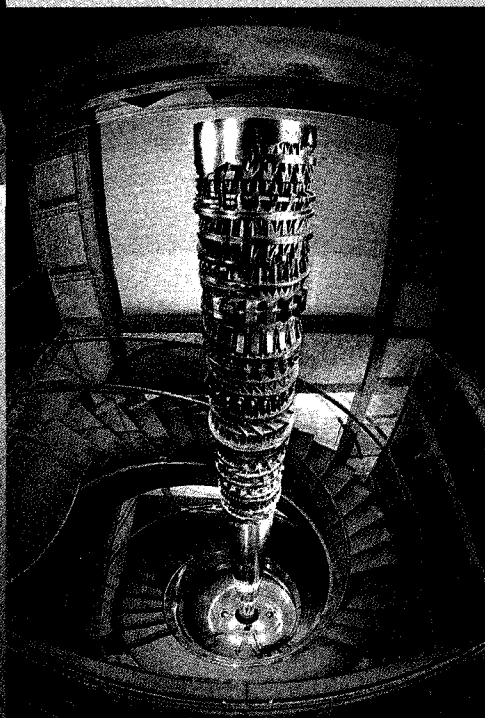


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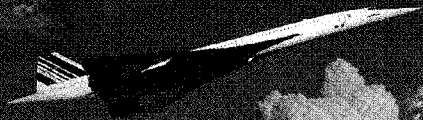
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of the way, Phillips extracts news
from history."—*New Yorker*

* FRED ANDERSON, *Los Angeles Times*

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RALPH ELLISON (Fiction, p. 84) published the "Invisible Man" in 1952 and at the time of his death, in 1994, was at work on a second novel. The book, "Juneteenth," is to come out in June.

PETER J. BOYER ("Miracle Man," p. 64), a staff writer, won a 1998 Writers' Guild award for the script of his documentary "Once Upon a Time in Arkansas."

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"Oooh! I think I just felt our stock split."

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THE MAIL



LOST ILLUSIONS

Frederick and Steven Barthelme's narrative of their rise and fall at the Mississippi casinos ("Good Losers," March 8th) captured what makes gambling so addictive: the surreal perfection of the drive to the casino, the first breath of casino air (an intake of what one believes is unlimited possibility), and the beautiful symmetry of a winning hand. Gambling often makes you feel like a child waking on a holiday morning. The illusion of a few hours of recaptured youth is what keeps many of us returning to casinos again and again, win or lose. It is no surprise that two grown sons played away their inheritance.

MARY SOJOURNER
Flagstaff, Ariz.

The Barthelme brothers' story left me in a situation similar to theirs after a night at the casinos: empty-handed. I did not have a cent's worth of sympathy for them. Their attempt to cast themselves as literary heroes with a touch of darkness—like Alexey Ivanovitch in Dostoyevsky's "The Gambler"—came off as vain posturing. Whether or not the Barthelmes surmount their legal troubles is beside the point. By deciding to become their own myth-makers, they have lost a lot more than money in Mississippi.

BEAU BOUDREAUX
Milwaukee, Wis.

UNIMPRESSED

I visited Brasília and, unlike Paul Goldberger ("Far Out," March 8th), I did not find the city "appealing." I walked past one drab rectangular building after another and marvelled that any architect might have considered those boxlike structures pleasing to the eye. Brasília was not designed for people; it was designed for automobiles.

DONALD MACCORQUODALE
Washington, D.C.

THE COPYRIGHT BLUES

In "Revolutionary Rag" (March 8th) John Lahr writes that Irving Berlin died at the age of a hundred and one. Lahr doesn't mention that Berlin lived long enough to witness the copyrights lapse on his earliest songs, a process that took seventy-five years (under the law then in effect). Given Berlin's legendary parsimony, the knowledge that his songs were drifting into the public domain must have been one indignity of his old age that particularly stung.

DAVID ENGLISH
Somerville, Mass.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

In "Schoenberg, Anyone?" (March 8th) Alex Ross includes an aside that Arnold Schoenberg's son, Judge Ronald Schoenberg, once fined O. J. Simpson for assault, but the fact that Ronald is an anagram of Arnold is more relevant to musicologists. Apparently, the composer did not limit his pursuit of permutation and continual variation to his music.

KATHLEEN FROST
Santa Barbara, Calif.

THE NUMBERS RACKET

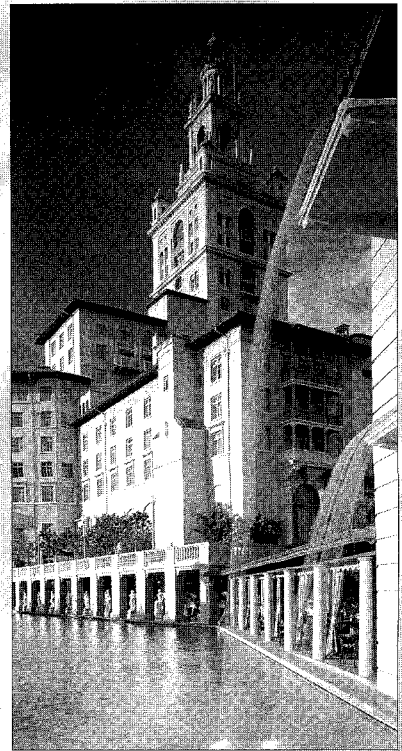
As an author whose book was recently ranked 1,106,125th in sales by the computers of Amazon.com, my spirits were lifted by Jamie Malanowski's report (The Talk of the Town, March 15th) on how he manipulated the rankings for Carlyle's "The French Revolution." Traumatized by my sub-million ranking, I wrote a personal essay about the humiliation of being a worst-selling author. Ironically, the essay's publication boosted sales of my book, catapulting it four hundred thousand places upward in the Amazon.com rankings. My publisher tells me that this kangaroo leap was accomplished with the sale of exactly twelve copies.

MICHAEL PASTORE
Urbana, Ill.

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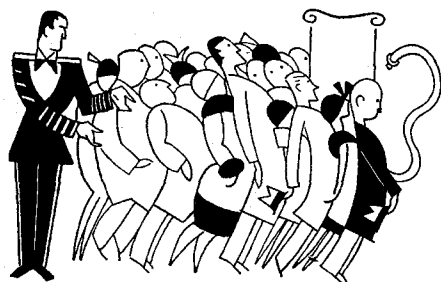
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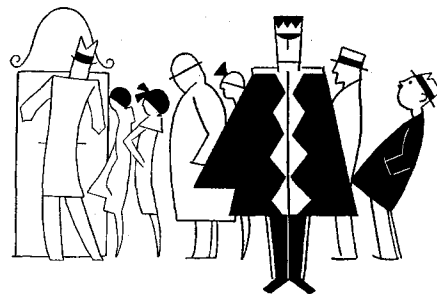
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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

AMY'S VIEW—Dame Judi Dench portrays a distinguished West End actress, in a recent drama by David Hare. Directed by Richard Eyre. In previews. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

THE CENSOR—A thriller about a female pornographer, written by Anthony Neilson and staged by the 29th Street Rep. In previews through April 11. Opens April 12 at 8. (212 W. 29th St. 465-0575.)

THE CIVIL WAR—The musical. Frank Wildhorn wrote the music and book. Jerry Zaks is the director. In previews. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

DREAM TRUE—The Vineyard Theatre presents a musical that follows the lifelong relationship of two boyhood friends, with music by Ricky Ian Gordon and lyrics and book by Tina Landau. In previews. (108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

ELEVATOR REPAIR SERVICE—The performance troupe, in their latest collaborative work, "Language Instruction." Previews April 8-9. Opens April 10 at 8 and continues, Thursdays through Sundays, through May 2. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St. 226-0051.)

THE ENGLISH TEACHERS—A comedy-drama by Edward Napier, set in West Virginia in 1960. In previews. (MCC Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765.)

EXACTLY LIKE YOU—Cy Coleman wrote the music and A. E. Hotchner the book for this new musical, a romantic courtroom comedy involving four couples, staged by the York Theatre Company. In previews. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.)

THE GERSHWINS' FASCINATING RHYTHM—A revue celebrating the songs of George and Ira Gershwin. Mark Lamos is the director. In previews. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

THE ICEMAN COMETH—Eugene O'Neill's late drama, starring Kevin Spacey. Howard Davies is the director. Preview on April 7. Opens April 8 at 5. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

LAKE HOLLYWOOD—The Signature Theatre Company wraps up its John Guare season with a new work by the playwright, starring Ralph Waite and Kate Burton. In previews through April 11. Opens April 13 at 8. (555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

MARLENE—Siân Phillips portrays Marlene Dietrich, in a musical play by Pam Gems, set in a concert hall in Paris in 1969. Directed by Sean Mathias. In previews through April 10. Opens April 11 at 7. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

PETER PAN—The former Olympic gymnast Cathy Rigby is back in town to star in a limited en-

gagement of the 1954 musical. Opens April 7 at 7:30. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

RING ROUND THE MOON—Lincoln Center Theatre presents Christopher Fry's 1950 adaptation of Anouilh's comedy "L'Invitation au Château." Gerald Gutierrez is the director. In previews. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

THE SHADOW OF A GUNMAN—Sean O'Casey's 1923 drama, his first produced play, about a poet who is mistaken for a criminal on the lam. In previews. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

A SIMPLE HEART—An adaptation of the Flaubert story, by the choreographer Annie-B Parson and Paul Lazar, who are co-directors. Preview on April 7. Opens April 8 at 8. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

THAT CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON—A revival of Jason Miller's 1972 drama, set during the twentieth-anniversary reunion of a high-school basketball team and their coach. In previews. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

OPENED RECENTLY

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN—A terrific revival of Irving Berlin's solid-gold score. It's played for romance and sass, which the vulnerable and charming Bernadette Peters and the hunky, easygoing Tom Wopat deliver in spades. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

ASHES TO ASHES—Harold Pinter's masterly evocation of how torture corrodes the human spirit, directed by Karel Reisz and superbly acted by Lindsay Duncan and David Strathairn. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/22 & 3/1/99.) (Gramercy, 127 E. 23rd St. 777-4900.)

BEAUTIFUL THING—Jonathan Harvey's 1993 drama, set in London, about two working-class boys who fall in love. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.)

BETTY'S SUMMER VACATION—Christopher Durang is a comedian whose fury takes the form of farce: a summer share turns into a catalogue of infamy and outrage—two murders, two rapes, two severed penises, one severed head, and an act of offstage incest—but his characters are beyond shock. They are mutants whose hearts and minds have been warped by the collective tabloid unconscious into a bright media cliché. (4/5/99) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes April 11.)

BITTER LEMON—A drama by Jaime Salom, in which a man must decide between love and marriage. (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293.)

LE CID—The Irish director Declan Donnellan's updated staging of Pierre Corneille's 1637 tragedy is set in twentieth-century Spain, during Franco's rule. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Closes April 11.)

CLOSER—Patrick Marber's slick dissection of the anatomy of desire follows four characters (Natasha Richardson, Anna Friel, Ciaran Hinds, and Rupert Graves) as they meet, mate, and move on in a kind of algebra of solitude which is factored out before our eyes; it's a shrewdly designed story that brings the characters up against their hearts. Marber can be very funny, and his writing is tight and well paced, but his staging is not. The transitions between scenes

are cumbersome, and he sometimes encourages his actors to slow down their delivery of some of his tastiest passages, which undermines rather than highlights the language. (4/5/99) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

DEATH OF A SALESMAN—This fiftieth-anniversary production of Arthur Miller's masterpiece has to contend with an ugly revolving set, which robs it of a sense of place, hobbles the pace, and throws the play slightly off-kilter. The casting is generally uneven, but the show still packs a wallop. Brian Dennehy is almost too strong and too solid in himself for the panic-stricken salesman, yet he makes Willy Loman's misguided love for his son Biff and his crazy competitiveness hurt like a punch to the heart. Elizabeth Franz turns in the most fully realized performance, as Willy's beleaguered wife. She is as thin as Dennehy is large, yet she grounds the play and gives it a strong, almost stoic emotional center. (3/8/99) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

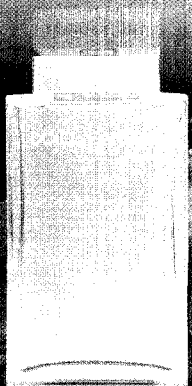
EVERYBODY'S RUBY—Thulani Davis's play about the murder of a prominent white doctor by his black mistress in a small Florida town is intelligent, but Davis can't decide if she's writing a detective thriller or a psychological literary biography. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200. Closes April 11.)



Corneille's "Le Cid," at BAM's Majestic Theatre.

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THE EXACT CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE—A small-town Southern man is torn between his overbearing mother and his sweetheart, in a comedy written by Joan Vail Thorne and starring Frances Sternhagen. (WPP Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

FAR EAST—A drama by A. R. Gurney, set during the Korean War. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

FOOTLOOSE—A musical adaptation of the 1984 film. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

FOSSE—This steamy revue of works by the choreographer Bob Fosse doesn't reveal anything new about the man behind the dances, but it does remind us why we won't be forgetting him anytime soon. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

FRAGMENTS OF A GREEK TRILOGY—A revival of director Andrei Serban and composer Elizabeth Swados's 1974 collaboration, comprising "Medea," "Electra," and "The Trojan Women." Performed in rotating repertory. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

IT AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT THE BLUES—A revue tracing the history of the musical form, staged by the Crossroads Theatre Company. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Closes April 11.)

JAMES NAUGHTON: STREET OF DREAMS—Between covers of romantic tunes by artists ranging from Billy Strayhorn to the King, Naughton inserts funny, standup-style anecdotes from his thirty-year stage career, and whether in monologue or in song he's a charmer. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313. Closes April 11.)

JODIE'S BODY—In Aviva Jane Carlin's one-woman play (which she wrote and performs) about an artist's model living in London, the initial sight of a large naked woman posing with one arm behind her head and one leg extended straight out, toes up, is distracting only for the first few minutes. After that, you're enchanted by her often hilarious stories, which are both light (art-class fidgeting) and heavy (apartheid South Africa). Carlin affectingly moves from fat-girl humor (stupendous thighs, dimply bums) to more abstract ideas related to the flesh (racism, beauty) without allowing her seriousness to jolt or become overbearing. (ArcLight, 152 W. 71st St. 307-4100.)

THE LION IN WINTER—The late James Goldman, who wrote the clumsy book to "Follies" with Stephen Sondheim and Hal Prince, could also write badly on his own. His 1966 version of the royal quarrels of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Henry II, turned into a bourgeois family squabble, makes a solid high-camp vehicle for Stockard Channing and Laurence Fishburne. Since the stakes and the idiom are not real, neither are the issues. A well-managed waste of time, with a good set by David Gallo and able direction by Michael Mayer, who needs to get down to more serious business. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

MEANWHILE, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF MOUNT VESUVIUS—It's 79 A.D. and smoke and ash are in the air, in a comedy from the Adobe Theatre Company. Written by Jay Reis. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 279-4200.)

THE MINEOLA TWINS—Paula Vogel's satire on women's roles—how they have changed and how they have stayed the same over the past forty years—predates her Pulitzer Prize-winning "How I Learned to Drive" and contains a lot less food for thought. Before the curtain goes up, Doris Day songs are played in the theatre and an enormous image of a torpedo bra stares out at the audience—and that's as subtle and fresh as this work gets. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 719-9300.)

THE MOST FABULOUS STORY EVER TOLD—Paul Rudnick's new version of a very old tale. (Minetta Lane Thea-

tre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

NIGHT MUST FALL—Maybe Matthew Broderick is just too darned cute to play a psychopath, but the main problem with this National Actors Theatre production of Emlin Williams's 1935 thriller is that the play was probably never that thrilling to begin with, and it certainly isn't thrilling in 1999. (Big house, rich old lady in a wheelchair, charming stranger? *Please.*) (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Closes April 11.)

NOT ABOUT NIGHTINGALES—A previously unproduced play, the first that Thomas Lanier Williams signed "Tennessee," successfully resuscitated by the Royal National Theatre. The absence of Williams's distinctive cadences and of his usual psychological complexity marks it as the work of a tenderfoot, yet the choreographic panache of Trevor Nunn's production invests the script with a poetic stylishness the prose lacks. (3/8/99) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

PARADISE HOTEL—A look into the nightmarish yet often hilarious workings of the human subconscious is almost always what you get with a Richard Foreman play (no complaints there), and in this case his concerns are particularly libidinal. A group of unfulfilled travellers searching for sexual nirvana end up finding nothing even remotely like it. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650. Closes April 18.)

THE PITCHFORK DISNEY—A pair of immature twins pushing thirty mix it up with two eccentric cabaret singers, in a dark comedy by Philip Ridley. Presented by the Blue Light Theatre Company. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 279-4200.)

PREMIUM BOB—We didn't feel like doing it, so we asked David Latham, one-half of the comedy duo Premium Bob, to review "Man-hunt," their latest show: "David Latham, an explosive and engaging talent, drags his deadweight partner, Paul Boocock, through ninety minutes of explosive, soul-cleaving theatre in this new drama. New York City hasn't seen anything this exciting and explosive since Tony Danza starred in Maeterlinck's gripping and explosive 'Aroma.' An explosive evening!" (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 216-9596. Closes April 17.)

REO—In Chay Yew's drama, an American writer revisits her native China during the Cultural Revolution. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

ROLLIN' ON THE T.O.B.A.—A musical about the final days of black vaudeville, starring Sandra Reaves-Phillips, Rudy Roberson, and Ronald (Smokey) Stevens. Co-directed by Mr. Stevens and Leslie Dockery. (Kit Kat Klub, 124 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

SNAKEBIT—Two guys, a gal, and an AIDS test. With all the one-liners and dialogue cued by contemporary culture, this comedy by the actor and first-time playwright David Marshall Grant, like a lot of new plays, seems like a sitcom rewritten for the stage (fewer

jokes, more "issues"). It has no real core to it, and throwing in the fear of H.I.V. comes off as a predictable and cheap attempt to give it one. Still, it's almost as painless as back-to-back episodes of "Friends," and the cast is topnotch. Jace Alexander directed. (Century Theatre, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

THIS IS OUR YOUTH—While Kenneth Lonergan's highly praised comedy about postadolescent heartbreak shows real theatrical promise, it is good on surface behavior but not on subtext—everything that is psychologically important happens offstage. (Douglas Fairbanks, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

TONGUE OF A BIRD—A rescue pilot (Cherry Jones) searches the Adirondacks for a missing girl, in a drama by Ellen McLaughlin. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200. Closes April 18.)

THE TURN OF THE SCREW—Jeffrey Hatcher's adaptation of the Henry James novella. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes April 17.)

THE 2.5 MINUTE RIDE—The comic actress Lisa Kron gets it: unless a personal story resonates with compassion for humanity, it alienates. Her solo show, a tale of her trip to Auschwitz with her father (who survived the Holocaust but whose parents did not), is offset by extremely funny memories of her family's regular trips to an Ohio amusement park (her father loves roller coasters) and of her brother's wedding to a woman he met on the Internet. In the midst of it all, Kron pulls off the impossible: she makes you feel something like compassion for a Nazi her father interrogated after the war; you still hate him, but he almost seems human. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200. Closes April 18.)

VIA DOLOROSA—Because David Hare's lively monologue about his first trip to Israel is about Israelis and Arabs, he sees this work as activism; the advertisements for the show refer to it as a "play." In fact, it is neither. It is a somewhat overproduced ninety-minute after-dinner speech that sheds no new light on the conflict but does bring news of Hare's nostalgia for political mission and a sense of "the strife of the soul"—a phrase he picked up during the journey. Stephen Daldry is the director. (3/29/99) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

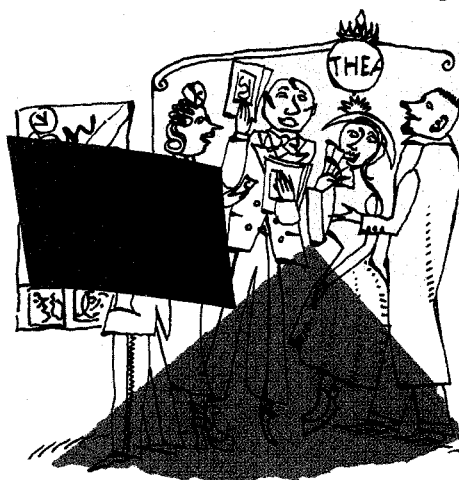
THE WEIR—A Royal Court Theatre staging of Conor McPherson's latest drama. Ian Rickson is the director. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

WIT—Right up to the last second, this first play by Margaret Edson, about the life and death (from ovarian cancer) of a John Donne scholar (Kathleen Chalfant, in an excruciating, powerful performance), has riches of acting, writing, and stagecraft. (1/18/99) (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN—A nothing burger for audiences of all ages. (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

ART: Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.... **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace**, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100.... **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES: Astor Place Theatre**, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.... **CABARET: Studio 54**, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.... **CATS: Winter Garden**, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.... **CHICAGO: Shubert**, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.... **DE LA GUARDA: Daryl Roth**, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.... **THE FANTASTICS: Sullivan Street Playhouse**, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.... **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: Stardust**, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200.... **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH: Jane Street Theatre**, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.... **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE: Westside**, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.... **JEKYLL & HYDE: Plymouth**, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.... **KILLER JOE: SoHo Playhouse**, 15 Vandam St. 239-6200.... **LATE-NITE CATECHISM: St. Luke's Church**, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.... **THE LION KING: New Amsterdam**, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.... **LES MISÉRABLES: Imperial**, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.... **MISS SAIGON: Broadway Theatre**, 425 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.



NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

- THE NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC AND THE LINCOLN CENTER JAZZ ORCHESTRA**—See Classical Music. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. April 7-8 and April 10 at 8, April 9 at 2, and April 13 at 7:30.)
- BILLY TAYLOR TRIO**—Taylor's piano playing mirrors his public persona: it's sturdy, erudite, resolutely mainstream. Featured guest Grady Tate might be better known as a singer were it not for his reputation as a world-class drummer. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. April 8 at 7.)
- RAY BROWN TRIO**—Supernal technique, sound, timing, and taste have made Brown jazz's pre-eminent bassist, but his storehouse of blues melodies and his ability to express them with funky eloquence are what make him a great American artist. He's the man to beat, and no one's come close yet. Joining this jazz giant are bassist Jay Leonhart, guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli, and pianist Bill Charlap. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715 April 8 at 8.)
- B. B. KING**—At seventy-three, the legendary guitarist continues to take it slow. His playing has evolved into a ritual, each phrase massaged into an ecstatic sheen, and his voice, happily burnished from years of touring, sounds like an invitation to testify. Who said the blues were depressing? (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. April 9 at 7 and 11.)
- VINCENT HERRING QUARTET**—Herring, a vivacious saxophonist who may come closest to capturing Cannonball Adderley's bounding spirit, has lately been asserting more of his own lyric personality into his highly charged music. (Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, 58 Seventh Ave., Brooklyn. 718-822-3300. April 10 at 8.)
- YO LA TENGO, ALAN LICHT, AND PALACE**—Hoboken's finest, a trio that excels in both crisp, three-minute pop songs and long, melancholy experiments, mixes it up with the avant-guitarist Licht and the post-folk troubadour Will Oldham, who performs under the name Palace. (Courthouse Theatre, Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. 505-5181. April 13 at 7:30 and 10.)
- BRUCE HORNSBY**—Once an enormous solo artist in the manner of an up-and-coming Billy Joel, the laid-back piano man is now best known as a former Grateful Dead keyboardist. His latest release, "Spirit Trail," is a two-disk, ninety-minute affair that covers lots of ground. Perhaps too much ground. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. April 13 at 8.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

- BOTTOM LINE**, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—April 8: **DAVID JOHANSEN AND THE HARRY SMITHS**. The man who also goes by the name Buster Poindexter, and who once led the New York Dolls, tries on another hat with his latest project, a folk-music band that gets its name from the collector who put together the seminal "Anthology of American Folk Music" back in 1952. April 13: **JOHN HAMMOND, SAFFIRE—THE UPPITY BLUES WOMEN**, and **COREY HARRIS** provide an evening of acoustic blues.
- BOWERY BALLROOM**, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—April 7-8: **ASIAN DUB FOUNDATION**. This sprawling Anglo-Paki dance collective represents the best of England's thriving club scene. Not quite dub in the old-fashioned Jamaican way, the Foundation presents anarchic break beats and fierce jungle grooves. April 9: **FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE**. Sophomore slump? Sophomore schmophomore: "Utopia Parkway," the second album by this *Über*-talented pop quartet, led by songwriters Adam Schlesinger and Chris Collingwood, is every bit as bright, funny, and addictive as their fantastic 1996 self-titled debut. The themes are the same: unrequited love, suburban ennui, teen covetousness. But the nova luminosity of the first disk has dimmed a bit in favor of



Doug Elkins Dance Company in "Of Don Juans and Dying Swans," at D.T.W.

Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . **THE MYSTERY OF IRMA YEP**: Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . **OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS**: John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . **PERFECT CRIME**: Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA**: Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . **RAGTIME**: Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . **RENT**: Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . **THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL**: Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . **SECRETS EVERY SMART TRAVELER SHOULD KNOW**: Ibis, 327 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . **SIDE MAN**: Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ**: Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . **THE SOUND OF MUSIC**: Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . **STOMP**: Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . **SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE**: HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING**: St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.

DANCE

- ELIOT FELD'S BALLET TECH**—April 6-8 at 8: "Contra Pose," "A Soldier's Tale," and "Paper Tiger." . . April 9-10 at 8: "Simon Sez," "Asia," "Re: X," and "Felix: The Ballet." . . April 10-11 at 2, the family matinees: "Simon Sez," "Joggers," and "Half Time." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through May 9.)
- "OF DON JUANS AND DYING SWANS"**—The best descriptions of Doug Elkins's inventive dance works often come from the choreographer himself. He calls "In Winter, Stand," the first of three premières on his latest program, "a Celtic knot masquerading as a tango." "Philenor" is an "aikido set done in a swarm of moths," and "Wrench," set to a score of Burt Bacharach tunes, he says, is like being taken through a cocktail party at the age of four, watching your parents slowly getting drunk ("There's a beautiful awkwardness in matters of the heart"). The program is completed by Elkins's wonderful repertory work "Bipolarbear." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. April 8-10 at 8 and April 11 at 3. Through April 25.)
- DANCEBRAZIL**—The sixteen dancers and musicians of this expatriate company specializing in capoeira (the whirling-and-kicking

martial-art dance tradition invented by Afro-Brazilian slaves) present "Camara (Comrade)," about the role of capoeira in the samba culture, and "Serra Pelada (Bald Mountain)," about the effects of the Brazilian gold rush. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. April 8-11 at 8:30.)

"HI EVERYBODY!"—The choreographer Tere O'Connor continues to add surreal (alternately goofy and mysterious) texts to his fractured ballet steps, in his latest evening-length work, which sets his six company members on a Pirandello-like search for their own shifting characters. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. April 7-10 at 8.)

"THE GYPSY CARAVAN"—Six groups of Gypsy dancers and musicians, from Rajasthan, Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Spain, in an evening of Romany dance and music. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. April 9-10 at 8.)

"DANCING ACROSS CULTURES"—The Bronx festival of dance. April 9 at 8: Afro-Caribbean dance by Retumba. . . April 10 at 8: Cherokee social and competition dances by Galuyesti Dance Company. . . April 11 at 3: Afro-Honduran dance by Wanichigu Dance Company. (Loving Theatre, Lehman College, 250 Bedford Park Blvd. W., the Bronx. For free tickets, which are required, call 718-960-8833.)

DANCES PATRELLE—The twenty-eight-member company, under the direction of Francis Patrelle, performs repertory work, including "Black and Blue & Bartok" and the première of "Madame X." (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. April 8 at 7:30, April 9-10 at 2 and 8, and April 11 at 2.)

"PART III: THE TALE OF GENJI"—The concluding section of the choreographer Saeko Ichinohé's staging of the eleventh-century Japanese novel focusses on Prince Genji's frail and reflective final days. (Clark Studio Theatre, Rose Building, Lincoln Center. 757-2531. April 6 at 6:30 and April 7-8 at 8.)

"THE QUIET ROOM"—The director Lucie Tiberghien and the tap choreographer Hervé Le Goff collaborate on a full-length work for the seven-member company, about a boy mistakenly placed in an asylum. The story is based on Howard Buten's 1981 novel, "Burt." (Synchronicity Space, 55 Mercer St. 501-2237. April 7-10 and April 13 at 8 and April 11 at 4:30 and 7. Through April 18.)

slightly more complex arrangements and more adventurous melodies. Live, a full set of the best Fountains of Wayne tunes should inspire immediate dreams of summer. With the Australian singer-songwriter **BEN LEE**.

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Buddy Guy may be a better-known singer, but **OTIS RUSH** (April 9-10) has been nipping at his ankles for more than four decades. Rush is nothing if not intense: his phrasing stings with a lyricism just this side of murderous, and his pledge "I've been wronged, but I won't be wronged again" is just as chilling.

COPACABANA, 617 W. 57th St. (582-2672)—Before there was the Buena Vista Social Club there was **¡CUBANISMO!** (April 9). Formed five years ago in Havana by trumpeter Jesús Alemañá, this multigenerational ensemble may not have won a Grammy (as did Buena Vista), but it has turned out three outstanding, and popular, albums that successfully marry old-timers' experience and younger musicians' enthusiasm to keep alive *son*, mambo, *descarga*, and other forms of Cuban music. Their latest release, "Reencarnación," features the veteran vocalist Rolando (Rolo) Martínez, and he's sure to be a treat onstage.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—April 10: **LADYBUG TRANSISTOR** turns out soothing, sixties-esque pop that'll make you a daydream believer. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—April 8: San Francisco's **IMPERIAL TEEN** plays glorious, whooshing pop. April 10: **MARY LOU LORD**. Perhaps the world's most successful subway busker, this Boston singer, who specializes (like most buskers) in other people's material, earned her rebel stripes recording for the hip indie label Kill Rock Stars. Now she's threatening to become one. April 10: The performance artist **JUDITH REN-LAY**.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—When singer **JOHN WESLEY HARDING** (April 10) burst onto the scene in the late eighties, he raised quite a few eyebrows—for all the wrong reasons: a stage name taken from an old Dylan album and a style lifted straight from the pen and larynx of Elvis Costello. But the news got better: on "John Wesley Harding's New Deal" (1996), he displayed more inspiration than derivation, and on last year's "Awake" he hit his stride. He's gone back to school with his latest album, "Trad Arr Jones," in which he tackles, with considerable skill, traditional folk tunes dating back four centuries. With **JILL SOBULE**.

MERCURY LOUNGE, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—April 8-9: The nearly comatose indie rock of **LOW**, which is led by the prolific and talented songwriter Bill Callahan. April 10-11: **SAM PREKOP**, the brains behind the Chicago experimental rock band Sea and Cake, has put together a self-titled debut solo album that is so ethereal it threatens to evaporate as you listen to it. With the help of bossa-nova rhythms and the strong team of bassist Josh Abrams and drummer Chad Taylor, though, Prekop's album achieves a sort of quotidian bliss; like a steaming cup of chamomile tea, it's good and soothing, but it's not going to keep you up.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—April 8: Head-of-the-class allusions with the quick-witted rappers **BLACK EYED PEAS**. Dining.

TONIC, 107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—April 11: Helium vocalist and guitarist **MARY TIMONY**. **TRAMPS**, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—April 7: **VANILLA ICE**, rap's finest human punch line continues his unlikely metamorphosis into a thuggish metal singer. April 9: The always funkier than thou **PARLIAMENT FUNKADELIC**. **WETLANDS**, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—April 8: The local funksters **DEEP BANANA BLACKOUT** get a dose of the real deal when former Sun Ra Arkestra and Kool and the Gang trumpeter **MICHAEL RAY** joins them onstage. April 10: **BERNIE WORRELL**, the great keyboardist and Talk-



Sam Prekop, at the Mercury Lounge.

ing Heads, Tom Tom Club, and Parliament Funkadelic alumnus, leads his band the Woo Warriors. April 12: Virtuoso rappers **THE ROOTS** host a jam session featuring guest artists. April 13: The **HIGH TIMES CANNABIS CUP BAND** burns it down Tuesdays in April.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BIRDLAND, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Having played with Lester Young, Charlie Parker, and John Coltrane, the seventy-three-year-old drummer **ROY HAYNES** (here April 8-10) could well rest on his laurels. Instead, he takes his role as elder statesman very seriously, nurturing new talent and handing down the secrets of the art of leading an airtight small group. April 13: The **MINGUS ORCHESTRA**. Dining. **CARLYLE HOTEL**, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through May 1, **BARBARA COOK**. . . . ♪ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **PETER MINTUN** is in attendance.

IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through April 11: The **CYRUS CHESTNUT** trio. Equal parts Art Tatum and Count Basie, this pianist is a maniacal two-handed speed demon who can turn around and deliver the goods with a single note. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **LES PAUL**.

JAZZ STANDARD, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—The expert modernist-piano stylist **JOANNE BRACKEEN** (April 7-11) is joined by special guest **RAVI COLTRANE**, a young player who's scaled seemingly insurmountable expectations to become a saxophonist with his own rapidly developing voice. Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—April 7-10: **STEVE KUHN**, a marvellous pianist who finds new vistas in old standards, backed up by the first-rate

rhythm section of bassist **DAVID FINCK** and drummer **BILLY DRUMMOND**.

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—An underrated talent still to be reckoned with, the bassist **MARIO PAVONE** (April 7-9) draws more from Charles Mingus than just an aggressive approach to his instrument; he's an atmospheric composer who can coax a lavish sound out of a compact band. April 7 finds Pavone with pianist **URI CAINE** and the innovative drummer **BARRY ALTSCHUL**; on April 8 he's with a quartet featuring piano and guitar; and on April 9 he's with his exciting, horn-heavy sextet. April 11: The **STEVE LACY** trio. Lacy directs melodic lines from his soprano saxophone as if he were wielding a laser beam: notes land precisely where they should, methodically, inevitably. That he invests this precision with passion is the essence of an art he's been refining since his days as a precocious adolescent player. Lacy's focus splits between his own exacting compositions and those of Thelonious Monk, whose work he's been dissecting for forty-plus years now.

LENOX LOUNGE, 288 Lenox Ave., between 124th and 125th Sts. (427-0253)—April 9-10: The **CECIL PAYNE** quartet. You've got to give it up for a septuagenarian like Payne, a bebop mainstay who can still make his elephantine baritone sax bark and bite.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—**SONNY FORTUNE** (through April 11) has four instruments to pour his heart (and four decades of experience) into: the tenor, alto, and soprano saxophones and the flute. He's a masterly technician on each, although the tenor brings out a tempered wildness that suits him best. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The Cuban pianist **CHUCHO VALDÉS** is in through April 11. Pianists be warned: Valdés, a terrifying conglomeration of Art Tatum, Cecil Taylor, Bill Evans, and countless Cuban virtuosos, is capable of making you wish you had never been born. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—The Basilica of Saint Francis, in Assisi, which was severely damaged by the earthquakes in September, 1997, has sent its treasury on the road. It's a spectacular trove of Byzantine and early-Renaissance paintings, crucifixes, reliquaries, illuminated manuscripts, and books. Some of the most impressive objects, such as an exquisite little fragment of a Fra Angelico, a devotional image of Saint Anthony of Padua, and a glorious tempera triptych with the Madonna and Child attended by music-making angels, by Francesco di Gentile, were the gift of an American, F. Mason Perkins (1874-1955). Perkins served alongside Bernard Berenson as an adviser to the collectors Philip and Robert Lehman, and these works from his own collection are now exhibited in the Robert Lehman wing. Through June 27. . . . ♪ "The Mirror of the Medieval World" presents two decades' worth of acquisitions by the Cloisters and the Met's department of medieval art. Through July 4. . . . ♪ "Picasso: Painter and Sculptor in Clay." Through June 6. . . . ♪ "Eighteenth-Century French Drawings in New York Collections." Through April 25. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Julia Margaret Cameron's Women." Cameron (1815-79) remains the most famous woman photographer of the nineteenth century. Her photography is profoundly Romantic in character, infused with the classics to which she could casually allude (Shakespeare, Milton, and Coleridge, among others, provided ideas for her "dress-up" portraits) and also marked by the pictorial aesthetics of the Victorian period, especially the dreamy visions of the Pre-Raphaelites.

Much disliked by the proponents of modernism in photography during the first half of this century, she is an excellent subject for revival in the age of Cindy Sherman. Cameron's photographs are anti-realistic even when they portray recognizable, even famous individuals; her subjects typically appear as if cloaked in the mists of eternity. Phyllis Rose, one of the contributors to the excellent catalogue, comments, "Her parlor maid, Mary Hillier, was so often released from household drudgery to pose as the Virgin that she was known locally as Mary Madonna." A superb exhibition. Through May 4. . . . ¶ "The Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect." Through June 1. . . . ¶ "Pop Impressions Europe/USA" presents print works by Americans (Warhol, Lichtenstein, et al.) beside examples from their European counterparts (Richard Hamilton, Gerhard Richter). Through May 18. . . . ¶ "Sight Gags: Grotesque, Caricature, and Wit in Modern and Contemporary Drawing." Through May 4. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Picasso and the War Years: 1937-45." Through May 9. . . . ¶ "Photography: An Expanded View," includes works by Cindy Sherman, Anna Gaskell, Rineke Dijkstra, Uta Barth, Andreas Gursky, and Tseng Kwong Chi. Through May 16. . . . ¶ "Jim Dine: Walking Memory, 1959-69." Through May 16. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

GROLLIER CLUB, 47 E. 60th St. (838-6690)—"Treasures from the Libraries of the National Trust," arranged under the patronage of the Prince of Wales, presents fine books, manuscripts, and incunabula from such British estates as Blickling, Anglesey Abbey, Ickworth, Stourhead, Kedleston, Kingston Lacy, and Charlecote. Through April 17. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5.)

MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E. 36th St. (685-0008)—"Poe: The Ardent Imagination" is an admirably mounted examination of the great poet and storyteller's career, a hundred and fifty years after his death. Poe had such neat handwriting that one can actually read all the letters and manuscripts on display (so rarely the case in literary exhibitions). He pasted together all the pages of the holograph of "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains" end on end, so that it reads like a long, thin Chinese scroll. Surely no writer has attracted a more glittering array of illustrators: here one can see "The Raven" as imagined by Manet (for Mallarmé's translation) and by Gustave Doré; another collection of the verse has a loose, flowing portrait of the poet by Matisse, next to one of the five surviving photographs of Poe. Through May 9. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5; Fridays, 10:30 to 8; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

JULIE HEFFERNAN—Exuberant, bizarre surrealist fantasies, marvellously painted, of women, children, and every manner of monster and beast, usually in idyllic settings. "Self-Portrait as a Hairy Woman" turns out to be a painting of apples, some of which contain tiny, strange scenes: a dog with a woman's head, a couple staring in horror at cavorting badgers, a woman waving a man's severed leg at someone wielding a butterfly net in a lovely forest glade. Through April 17. (Littlejohn, 41 E. 57th St. 980-2323. . . . ¶ For another show of Heffernan's works, see the Downtown Short List.)

ROBERT MANGOLD—Minimalism on a monumental scale (adjoining canvases measuring up to twenty-seven feet in length), enriched by an introspective equilibrium. Tilting ellipses, drawn by hand in pencil on grounds of cool blue or hot orange, alternate with watery-gray rectangles; for the first time in the artist's work, the images overlap the edges of the canvases. There are hints at a narra-

tive—the ellipses tumble through space with an elegant rhythm reminiscent of Matisse's dance paintings. Through April 17. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292.)

CHARLES SELIGER/MORRIS GRAVES—Incredibly detailed abstractions in acrylic, about a foot square, in a palette ranging from pale pastels to vibrant primary hues. Some of the panels are like tiny field paintings, while others resemble mysterious mosaics, perhaps made from pollen or tiny flakes of quartz. The technique is amazing and completely triumphs over content. / Exquisite nature studies from the forties and fifties by a modern Zen mystic. Some calligraphic drawings of birds are delightfully naturalistic; a gouache of the waning moon has been transformed into an abstract koan. Both shows through May 1. (Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. 247-0082.)

"REST/ENERGY"—Documentation of Conceptual and performance-art works, mostly from the seventies, by the Cuban artist Ana Mendieta (1948-85) and the Yugoslavian Marina Abramovic. (A concurrent show of similar

work is at the Sean Kelly gallery; see the Downtown Short List.) Through April 24. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. 315-0470.)

SHORT LIST—**ADELE ALSOP**, Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122. Through April 24. . . . **WILLIAM BAILEY**, Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454. Through April 24. . . . **SUE COE**, Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. 245-6734. Through June 5. . . . **JOSEPH CORNELL**, Helman, 20 W. 57th St. 245-2888. Through April 24. . . . **EMILY EVELETH**, Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227. Through April 24. . . . **GLEN HANSEN** and **KEVIN KING**, Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. 759-2345. Both shows through April 24. . . . **BILL JACKLIN**, Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900. Open Mondays; through April 17. . . . **STEVEN KATZ**, Perlow, 41 E. 57th St. 644-7171. Through April 22. . . . **MICHAEL MAZUR**, Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. 397-0669. Through May 15. . . . **SIGMAR POLKE**, Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 794-0550. Through April 24. . . . **JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER**, Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Open Mondays; through June 5. . . . **NEIL WELLIVER**,

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De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050. Through April 24. . . . **JANE WILSON**, DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111. Through May 1.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

WALLACE BERMAN / KENNETH GOLDSMITH / ALLEN RUPPERSBERG—A super group show highlighting three generations of artists obsessed with the visual power of text. Berman (1926-76), a beatnik druggie filmmaker, also made very beautiful collages, which typically feature snippets of cabalistic Hebrew texts amid images redolent of late-flowering Symbolism. Ruppertsberg is represented by three decades of his laconic yet often dryly amusing photographs, drawings, and sculptures, all of which are about the process of reading and often have explicitly literary references—for example, a drawing of Strunk & White's "The Elements of Style," with the artist's reading time (two hours and fifty-eight minutes). The Strunk & White is also one of the subjects of Kenneth Goldsmith's works on paper, which consist of expanses of white dotted with only the punctuation marks used in the original. D. H. Lawrence's "The Rocking Horse Winner" is thick with commas, question marks, etc., while Molly Bloom's soliloquy consists of only a few undifferentiated scores on a sea of white. All shows through April 17. (Gorney, Bravin, and Lee, 526 W. 26th St. 352-8372.)

MARY BEYT—Complex drawings whose depth results from the artist's superimposition of sheets of clear plastic, which separate the layers of images. Beyt has made rubber stamps of old pictures she's gleaned from books—unicorns, flora and fauna, the occasional wide-eyed Medusa. These bits of found imagery are clustered in dense agglomerations and then slathered with Helen Frankenthaler-ish daubs and stains of bright color—sensory overload on a modest scale. Through April 17. (Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 727-2752.)

SHORT LIST—**JEAN COCTEAU**, Wessel and O'Connor, 242 W. 26th St. 242-8811. Through May 9. . . . **MIKE KELLEY**, Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100. Through May 8. . . . **ELLSWORTH KELLY**, Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through May 15. . . . **MARY KELLY** and **TIRTZA EVEN**, Postmasters, 459 W. 19th St. 727-3323. Both shows through April 24. . . . **JULIAN LETHBRIDGE**, Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 255-1105. Through April 24. . . . **KERRY JAMES MARSHALL**, Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. 645-1701. Through April 17. . . . **ELIZABETH PEYTON**, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, 436 W. 15th St. 627-5258. Through May 1. . . . **DANIEL PFLUMM**, Greene Nafati, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through May 8. . . . **JACK PIERSON**, Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727. Through May 1. . . . **JULIO RONDO**, Gasser & Grunert, 524 W. 19th St. 807-9494. Through May 8. . . . **JONI SCHNELL**, Eller, 529 W. 20th St. 206-6411. Through April 17.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

ON KAWARA—"I READ 1966-95." During the given thirty-year period, this Conceptual artist clipped items from newspapers published on the dates in his signature "date paintings"—month, day, year, rendered in white text on solid ground. While the date paintings have the cold, mute charm of Conceptualist enumeration, these ring binders of old journalistic clippings fill in, haphazardly yet often decisively, the events of the days on which the paintings were made. The political fevers of the times, passing sensations, and occasionally a rueful, retrospective humor mark these works. A rotating series of date paintings corresponding to the binders has also been assembled, clarifying the relationship between

the terse and impeccable paintings and the garrulous, slightly disheveled archival material. Through April 17. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St. 966-9074.)

BARRY MCGEE—"The Buddy System," an indoor work by the San Francisco guerrilla muralist. A good portion of McGee's work has been painted over by local authorities, a fate he shares with Diego Rivera and graffiti artists, two of his principal influences. In

TABLES FOR TWO



ROETTELE A.G., 126 E. 7th St. (674-4140)—When Ingrid Roettele was growing up in the Black Forest, food was everything in her family, mainly because "there was never very much of it," she says. Ten years ago she compensated for that early deprivation by opening this charming Old World-meets-East Village restaurant, which has been turning out robust German and Swiss specialties ever since.

Dirndl-clad waitresses, their hair either coiled in braids (Old World) or dyed a shade of red not found in nature (E.V.), maneuver briskly through two cozily appointed, vaguely Bavarian rooms lit by Italian-glass chandeliers and tree branches adorned with tiny lights. Although there's an element of kitsch at work here, it feels comfortable rather than contrived. Daniel, a stern-faced waiter in lederhosen, looks as if he just stepped out of Heidi's Alpine hamlet, but he's actually from Ohio. ("I feel totally Swiss, though," he confides.)

The hearty nature of the food insures that no one goes hungry at Ingrid's place, so it's a good idea to start slowly, with the house salad (a mountain of greens in a sharp vinaigrette) or a few ruby slices of deeply flavorful *vianche des Grisons*, air-dried Swiss beef. On the other hand, if you're considering *raclette à discrétion*—warm pools of rich and aromatic cheese dotted with pearl onions and cornichons, which arrive one gratin dish after another, until you come to your senses and put a stop to it—you may as well surrender completely and begin with *maluns*, caramelized onion-and-ham dumplings in an herb-flecked cream sauce. The ideal time to sample the excellent fondue (cheese for dinner, bittersweet chocolate for dessert) is on Thursday, which is Swiss-band night (hammer dulcimer, fiddles, accordion); this rollicking hillbilly music is as much fun as the fondue. During warm weather, the garden, obscured by a leafy grape-arbor pergola, is open to diners. "When the musicians yodel and the Concorde are hanging heavy on the bough," Roettele says, "nobody remembers where they are." (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays for dinner only, Fridays through Sundays for lunch and dinner; entrées \$9-\$18.)

the current installation, Olmec-like heads with lips curled in street-savvy froideur float on a blood-red ground covered with hip biomorphic doodles and graffiti tags. Percussive and energetic. Through April 24. (Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300.)

NILS NORMAN—Rooted in the politicized art of institutional critique and also in Gordon Matta-Clark's dramatic interventions in the

urban landscape in the seventies, Norman's show, entitled "The Cruel Dialectic: Decay and Opportunity," consists primarily of schematic plans for "redevelopment" in New York City. These computer-generated diagrams suggest an imaginary contest between the mega-development of the Hudson River Park and various pockets of urban resistance. Anyone who enjoys looking at maps or plans will have no trouble finding ample information herein to comprehend the possible future dystopias of the city. Through April 10. (American Fine Arts, 22 Wooster St. 941-0401.)

SHORT LIST—**MARINA ABRAMOVIC** and **ANA MENDIETA**, Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. 343-2405. Through April 24. . . . **DONALD BAECHLER**, Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-9300. Through April 10. . . . **PATTY CHANG**, Tilton, 49 Greene St. 941-1775. Through April 24. . . . **BONNIE COLLURA**, Basilico Fine Arts, 26 Wooster St. 966-1831. Through April 24. . . . **TIM HAWKINSON**, Ace, 275 Hudson St. 255-5599. Through April 30. . . . **JULIE HEFFERNAN** and **NANCY SPERO**, P.P.O.W., 476 Broome St. 941-8642. Both shows through April 17. . . . **LUISA KAZANAS**, Sara Meltzer's on View, 588 Broadway. 343-8256. Through April 24. . . . **SUSAN MAYR**, Bodell, 13 E. 7th St. 477-1820. Through April 25. . . . **NABIL NAHAS**, Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685. Through April 24. . . . **ERIN O'KEEFE**, Gering, 476 Broome St. 226-8195. Through April 24. . . . **RAYMOND PETTIBON**, The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 219-2166. Through April 10. . . . **RICHARD PETTIBONE**, Marcus, 578 Broadway. 226-3200. Through April 17. . . . **ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG**, Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224. Through April 17. . . . **DEBORAH ROSENTHAL**, Joseph Gallery, Hebrew Union College, 1 W. 4th St. 824-2205. Through July 16. . . . **CHARLES STIVEN**, Bridgewater/Lustberg, 560 Broadway. 941-6355. Through April 17.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEY'S—April 7: European and Oriental carpets. . . . April 9-10: A sale of English country-house furnishings and decorative pieces includes an early-nineteenth-century dining-room set that belonged to Mr. and Mrs. Fred Astaire—with no tap scratches on the tabletop! . . . April 12-13: Important jewelry. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S—April 8: European and Oriental carpets. . . . April 9: Wine. . . . April 13: Stamps. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.) . . . At **CHRISTIE'S EAST**: A sale of silver. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0430. April 13.)

PHILLIPS—An auction of jewelry includes a rare *pendule mystérieuse*, built in collaboration by Louis Cartier and Maurice Couët; the mystery is that its hands appear to float above the surface of the face, with no apparent connection to the clock's movement. (406 E. 79th St. 570-4830. April 11.)

DOYLE—A wide-ranging sale of collectibles, from chocolate molds to historic toys and Teddy bears. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. April 13.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

ANSEL ADAMS (1902-84)—A treat for Adams devotees, this show includes a few famous pictures and many prints of lesser-known images, including the eighteen photographs that comprised the artist's first portfolio, "Parmelian Prints of the High Sierras." Through May 1. (Carter, 560 Broadway. 966-1933.)

ROBERT FRANK—"From the Canadian Side," a show of vintage prints from the artist's Welsh-miner series of 1953 along with a selection of recent work. Through April 24. (Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999.)

ELIOT PORTER (1901-90)—Vintage dye-transfer landscapes and nature photographs by the pioneering colorist. Through May 15. (Alan Klotz/Photocollect, 22 E. 72nd St. 327-2211. Closed Tuesdays.)

CLIFFORD ROSS—Depending on how long you look at these mostly oversized black-and-white prints, you start to see different things—a blurry fishing net, a mass of melting cars, strands of DNA—when, in fact, it's all just water. In the spirit of Hockney, each photograph is a closeup of the surface of a swimming pool, yet these compositions are more New York cool than California splash. Through May 1. (Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070.)

PETER SEKAER (1901-50)—Gelatin-silver prints of nineteen-thirties street life in New York City and in cities and towns throughout the South. Through May 1. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010.)

FRED ZINNEMANN (1907-1997)—As an Austrian immigrant in the early thirties, twenty years before he would direct "High Noon" and "From Here to Eternity," Zinnemann made these somewhat familiar but well-done and subtly charged images of Wall Street, Grand Central Terminal, Times Square, and the Brooklyn Bridge. Through May 1. (Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292.)

"FLASHBACK: THE SIXTIES"—A group show of works by, among others, Diane Arbus, David Bailey, Linda McCartney, and Garry Winogrand. Through May 8. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY—"Newman's Gift: 60 Years of Photography," a retrospective of the portraitist Arnold Newman's career. Through June 6. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 8; and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

SHORT LIST—**HANS BELLMER**, Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. 794-4444. Through May 1. ... **SUSAN DERGES** and **TESSA TRAEGER**, Danziger, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. 734-5300. Both shows through May 8. ... **DAN ESTABROOK**, Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., at 23rd St. 242-7767. Through April 24. ... **EVE FOWLER**, Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747. Through April 10. ... **ELDON GARNET**, Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through April 24. ... **RONI HORN**, Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through May 8. ... **WENDELL MAC RAE**, Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510. Through April 10. ... **LAURENT MILLET**, Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave., at 25th St. 989-7600. Through May 15. ... **ANDREW MOORE**, Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255. Through May 15. ... **ROGER NEWTON**, Roth Horowitz, 160a E. 70th St. 717-9067. Through April 17. ... **MARTIN PARR**, Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166. Through April 24. ... **TOSHIO SHIBATA**, Laurence Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 397-3930. Through May 27. ... **JOSEF SUDEK**, Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Open Mondays; through April 22.

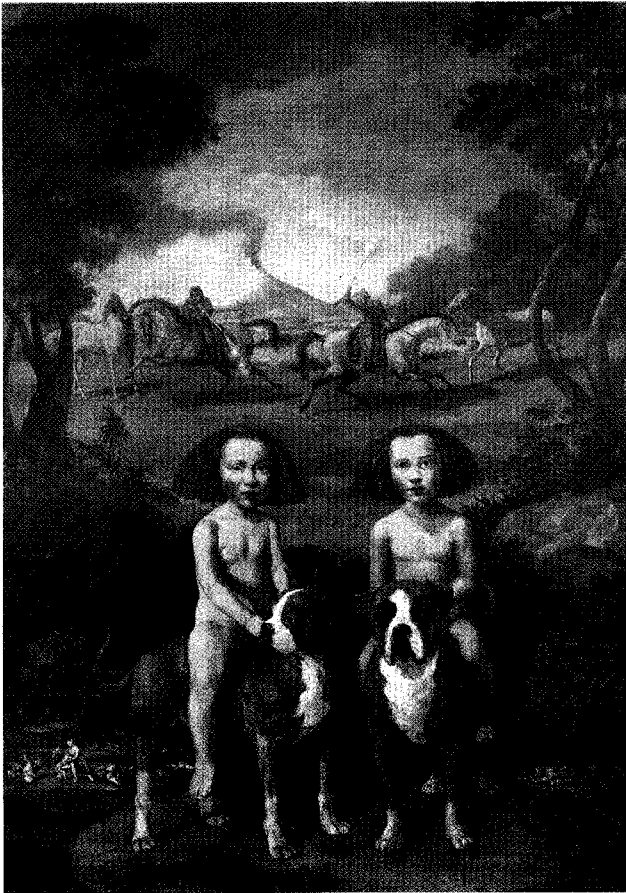
(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 875-5050, and for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**THE QUEEN OF SPADES**, by Tchaikovsky, with Galina Gorchakova, Olga Borodina, Elisabeth Söderström, Plácido Domingo, Nikolai Putin, and Dmitri Hvorostovsky; conducted by Valery Gergiev. (April 7 at 8 and April 10 at 1:30.) ... **RIGOLETTO**, with Youngok Shin, Frank Lopardo, and Kim Josephson; Maurizio Benini. (April 8 at 7:30 and April 12 at 8.) ... **SUSANNAH**, by Carlisle Floyd, with Renée Fleming, Jerry Hadley, John McVeigh, and Samuel Ramey; James Conlon. (April 9 and April 13 at 8.) ... **GIULIO CESARE**, by Handel, with Sylvia McNair,



At Littlejohn, "Self-Portrait as Infantis at the Hunt," by Julie Heffernan, whose work is also at P.P.O.W.

Jennifer Larmore, David Daniels, Stephanie Blythe, and Brian Asawa; John Nelson. (April 10 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. ... **NOTE:** The Metropolitan Opera National Council's 1999 Grand Finals Concert, spotlighting ten promising young singers, takes place in the house on April 11 at 3.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—April 7 at 7:30 and April 10 at 8: A double bill of Ravel's two operas, "L'Heure Espagnole" and "L'Enfant et les Sortilèges." ... ¶ April 8 at 7:30 and April 11 at 1:30: "Don Giovanni." ... ¶ April 9 at 8 and April 10 at 1:30: "La Bohème." ... ¶ April 13 at 7:30: "Intermezzo," by Strauss, performed in English. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

AMATO OPERA COMPANY—Opening performances of "The Magic Flute," in English. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. April 10 at 7:30 and April 11 at 2:30.)

OPERA ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK—Eve Queler conducts a concert performance of Halévy's "La Juive." (Carnegie Hall. April 13 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—In a too rare confluence of disparate Lincoln Center entities, the orchestra, conducted by Kurt Masur, teams up with Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra for a back-and-forth evening that features familiar movements from Grieg's incidental music to "Peer Gynt," played in its original settings and in arrangements by Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn. Completing the program are four Ellington works in new arrangements by Mr. Marsalis, performed by the groups together. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. April 7-8 and April 10 at 8, April 9 at 2, and April 13 at 7:30.)

BACHANALIA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA—The ensemble plays concertos by Bach (with violinist Nina Beilina) and Bellini (with oboist Vladimir Lande), as well as Beethoven's Septet and a Rossini sonata for strings. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. April 9 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

RIVERSIDE CHORAL SOCIETY—Patrick Gardner directs an all-Brahms concert that includes the "Alto Rhapsody" (with Jane Shaulis), "Schicksalslied," and "Nänie." (Church of the Holy Trinity, 213 W. 82nd St. April 10 at 8. For information about tickets, call 780-2181.)

SALZBURG MOZARTEUM ORCHESTRA—Hubert Soudant leads an all-Mozart program comprising the Overture to "Le Nozze di Figaro," the Piano Concerto in E-Flat Major (K. 482, with Till Fellner), a pair of concert arias (with mezzo-soprano Katharine Goeldner), and the Symphony No. 40. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. April 11 at 2.)

RECITALS

TOKYO STRING QUARTET—Playing quartets by Schumann (in A Minor), Michio Mamiya (the premiere of his Third, inspired by Native American religious beliefs), and Beethoven (in C Major, Op. 59, No. 3). (Alice Tully Hall. April 7 at 8.)

NEW YORK WOODWIND QUINTET—The group plays Hans Abrahamsen's "Walden" (after Thoreau) and Gunther Schuller's arrangement of Ravel's "Le Tombeau de Couperin"; colleagues join them for Mozart's Piano-and-Winds Quintet and Hindemith's rarely programmed Septet (from 1949). (Paul Recital Hall, Juilliard School, Lincoln Center. April 7 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

BARGEMUSIC—Presenting solo and chamber works by Jean-Marie Leclair, Debussy, Messiaen, and Fauré (his C-Minor Piano Quartet). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. April 8 at 7:30 and April 11 at 4.)

NEW YORK FESTIVAL OF SONG—Soprano Cyndia Sieden, tenor Rufus Müller, baritone Brett Polegato, and pianist Steven Blier take a tour of musical Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century, touching down on works by composers both famous (Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn) and not (including Thomas Linley the Elder, George Frederick Pinto, and Nicolas-Marie Dalayrac). (Weill Recital Hall. April 8 at 8.)

ELLEN ORNER—The violinist, assisted by pianist Marilyn Neeley, plays sonatas by Debussy and Brahms (in D Minor), as well as Schoenberg's "Phantasy" (Op. 47) and Kurtág's "Eight Duos" (Op. 4). (Landon Gallery, 1926 Broadway, at 64th St. April 8 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

JOHN ROOT—The winner of the Juilliard School's 1999 William Petschek Award performs piano works by Schoenberg (his "Three Piano Pieces," Op. 11), Chopin (twelve of his Preludes, Op. 28), Karen Tanaka, Debussy, and Stravinsky ("Three Movements from 'Petrouchka'"). (Alice Tully Hall. April 8 at 8.)

ALFRED BRENDL—The distinguished pianist settles in for a three-week Carnegie Hall residency that includes solo performances, lieder recitals (with Matthias Goerne), a concerto appearance, a chamber concert, and a poetry reading. April 9 at 7:30: Mozart's two piano quartets and a scaled-down version of his A-Major Concerto (K. 414). ...

April 12 at 7:30: A solo recital comprising Haydn's E-Minor Sonata (Hob. XVI:34), Schubert's Four Impromptus (D. 935), Schumann's "Kinderszenen," and Mozart's A-Minor Rondo and C-Minor Fantasy.

BEAUX ARTS TRIO—The ensemble offers piano trios by Rachmaninoff (his First), Shostakovich (his Second), and Dvořák (in F Minor, Op. 65). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. April 9-10 at 8.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER—In honor of the seventieth birthday of Charles Wadsworth, who founded the group thirty years ago, the society resurrects a typically imaginative program he put together in 1974. The wide-ranging repertoire includes solo and chamber songs by Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, and Saint-Saëns; Mozart's D-Major Flute Quartet; and Berg's Adagio for Clarinet, Violin, and Piano (the composer's own arrangement of the second movement of his Chamber Concerto). (Alice Tully Hall. April 9 at 8 and April 11 at 5.)

CONTINUUM—If the late twentieth century is to go down in music history as a period dominated by stylistic fusion, Paul Schoenfield is likely to be remembered as one of its chief torchbearers. That's ironic, since this Minnesota-born composer and pianist (now in his early fifties) has always led an independent creative life removed from trends and schools; nonetheless, it's hard to think of a composer who is as convincing in melding disparate styles into a new, authentic voice. American popular tunes and the sounds of the Jewish klezmer tradition are often prominent in his hyperkinetic music, but listeners may also be jolted by references to such influences as tango, ragtime, and boogie-woogie. In this concert, the noted modern-music ensemble performs "Elegie" and "Boogie" for piano four-hands, his Sextet (for a mixed ensemble of winds, strings, and piano), "Three Country Fiddle Pieces" (for amplified violin, percussion, and piano), and the recent, cantata-like "Sparks of Glory" (which draws on inspirational accounts from the Holocaust). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. April 10 at 8:30.)

LARA ST. JOHN AND NARI MATSUURA—The violinist and the pianist are joined by several string-playing colleagues in Dvořák's A-Major Piano Quintet (Op. 81) and Chausson's Concerto for Violin, Piano, and String Quartet. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. April 11 at noon.)

IAN BOSTRIDGE—The English tenor, assisted by pianist Julian Drake, performs songs by Schubert and Wolf. (Alice Tully Hall. April 11 at 2.)

KATHLEEN BATTLE—The soprano, with pianist Martin Katz, offers songs and arias by Handel, Mozart, and others. (Carnegie Hall. April 11 at 2.)

ALESSANDRA MARC—In this recital, the dramatic soprano sings arias and songs by (among others) Purcell, Handel, Strauss, and Berlioz (excerpts from "Les Nuits d'Été"). Pianist Daniella Orlando assists. (Whitman Theatre, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 718-951-4500. April 11 at 2.)

"FACADE"—Russell Oberlin recites Edith Sitwell's curious poems and Jonathan Sternberg leads a large chamber ensemble in William Walton's wacky score. The program also includes Elodie Lauten's new settings of poems by Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, and E. E. Cummings, as well as Richard Edelman's readings of poems by T. S. Eliot. (St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church, 315 W. 22nd St. April 11 at 3. Tickets at the door.)

SONDRA RADVANSKY AND SAMUEL RAMEY—The soprano and the bass perform songs, arias, and duets, with pianist Craig Rutenberg. (Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. 685-0008, ext. 347. April 11 at 4.)

AN DIE MUSIK—The chamber group offers pieces by Mozart, Beethoven, Dohnányi, and Jerzy Sapieyevski. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. April 11 at 4.)

GUILMETTE LAURENS AND LUCA PIANCA—Soprano and lutenist, performing Baroque music from France and Italy, by Lully, Monteverdi, and others. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. April 11 at 5.)

"20TH CENTURY MUSIC & ON"—This more or less annual concert presents Part's "Frates," Lee Hoiby's "The Italian Lesson," Poulenc's Sextet, and pieces by Piazzolla, Ravel, and Ronn Yedidia. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. April 11 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

BEST GUESSES—For the first hour of this out-of-the-ordinary evening, nineteen pianists, isolated in practice rooms, improvise what they imagine might go well with the pieces their colleagues are devising. Audience members may wander the halls to eavesdrop before they assemble in the concert hall to hear recordings of the nineteen tracks played simultaneously. It's a concept, and such well-known avant-gardists as Anthony Coleman, Joseph Kubera, Kathleen Supové, and "Blue" Gene Tyranny are sufficiently intrigued to participate. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. 242-4770. April 11 at 8.)

"FOCUS ON FOUR"—A Carnegie Hall composers workshop concludes with performances of pieces by four up-and-comers: Jason Eckardt, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, Michael Hersch, and Gary Powell Nash. (Weill Recital Hall. April 12 at 8.)

JOHN GILLOCK—The organist performs an all-Messian recital that includes the rarely programmed "Livre d'Orgue." (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. April 13 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

NATIONAL POETRY MONTH—April traditionally conjures images of spring showers and income taxes, but since 1996 the month has enjoyed a more pleasurable association, with what Poe called "the rhythmic creation of beauty." For starters, Poets House presents the Poetry Publication Showcase, its annual display of more than a thousand new poetry books. (72 Spring St. 431-7920. Through April 30.) . . . April 8 at 8: Poet laureate Robert Pinsky, who is compiling an audio and video archive of Americans' favorite poems, joins Russell Banks, Alice McDermott, Joyce Carol Oates, Francine Prose, and other novelists for a reading of their favorite verse. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824.) . . . April 9-11: The People's Poetry Gathering brings a potpourri of poets, critics, and musicians to downtown Manhattan. Highlights include a late-night session of erotic poetry, with writers Elena Alexander, Max Blagg, Regie Cabico, and others; an evening reading of Poe, set in a graveyard; and a reading and performance by singer-songwriter Ani DiFranco. For details on venues and other events, call 800-333-5982, ext. 5, or visit www.peoplespoetry.org.

"SOME ENCHANTED EVENING"—This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Broadway premiere of the musical "South Pacific"; in honor of the occasion, members of the original cast join actors George Hearn, Liz Callaway, and David Campbell in an evening of song and reminiscing. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. April 8 at 8.)

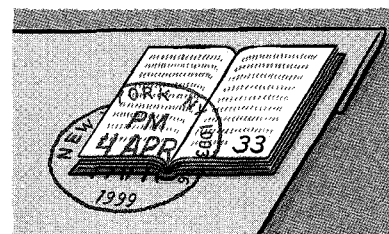
MORE READINGS—April 8 at 6:30: By Rob Snyder, from his book "Transit Talk: New York's Bus and Subway Workers Tell Their Stories." (Newseum/NY, 580 Madison Ave., at 57th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . April 12 at 8: By Cynthia Ozick and Norman Manea, from their work. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

TALK—April 13 at 6: Architect Richard Franklin Sammons celebrates Thomas Jefferson's birthday with a slide presentation entitled "Jefferson and the Ideal Villa." (Merchant's House Museum, 29 E. 4th St. For reservations, which are required, call 777-1089.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Dear —

"I HAVE shuddered every time I see announcement of the publication of some poor wretch's letters!" Rachel Carson once wrote to a friend. "It's just the principle of exposing something that is wholly private and personal and should be sacred." Winston Churchill

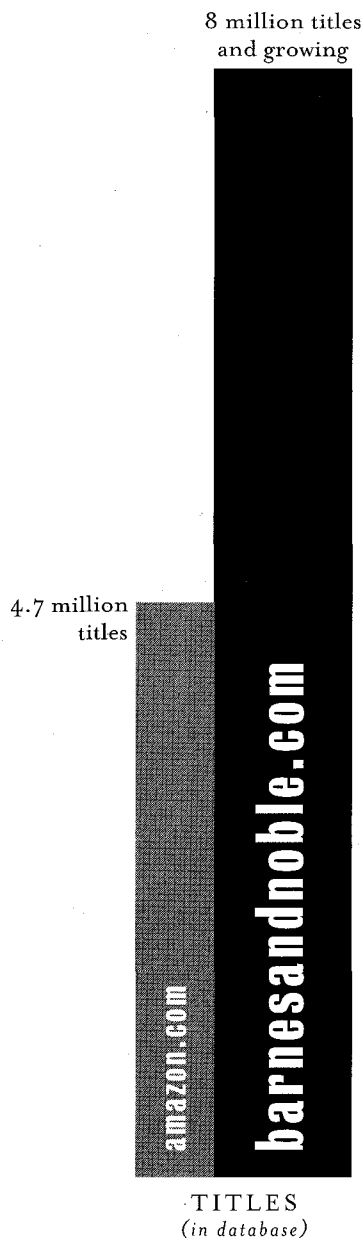


might well have agreed: in **WINSTON AND CLEMENTINE: THE PERSONAL LETTERS OF THE CHURCHILLS** (Houghton Mifflin), the great orator is exposed as his wife's "little Puggie Wow." This vast correspondence, edited by their daughter, Mary Soames, spans half a century and is both a historical record and a tribute to abiding love. After forty-four years of marriage, Churchill's pen still blazed: "I love you so much & miss you & long for yr return," he wrote in 1952. "We will just do nothing but sit & purr."

The Churchills' collected correspondence heads a wave of similar books coming later this spring. **DEAR EXILE** (Vintage) is a collection of letters between Hilary Liftin and Kate Montgomery, friends and former college roommates who were separated for a year when Montgomery and her husband join the Peace Corps and move to Kenya. While Montgomery is occupied with trying to find fresh drinking water (the village supply is "chunky" with sediment), her friend confronts the even more forbidding prospect of finding love in New York City. Alex Bartram, the heroine of Diane Smith's epistolary novel, **LETTERS FROM YELLOWSTONE** (Viking), is another single writer, an aspiring botanist studying medicine at Cornell in 1898. Her letter requesting a post on a Smithsonian-sponsored field study in Yellowstone Park is signed simply "A. E. Bartram"; the head of the study assumes the writer to be a man (and a doctor), and she is accepted on the expedition.

LETTERS TO A FICTION WRITER (Norton) is novelist Frederick Busch's compilation of advice from fellow-authors—Ray Bradbury, Tobias Wolff, and Flannery O'Connor among them—on the subject of how to stay the literary course. In Charles Baxter's essay, "Full of It," he addresses an agent who once told him that she loathed his novel: "Thank you, Julie, wherever you are, for your cruelty to me. Couldn't have done it without you."

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN



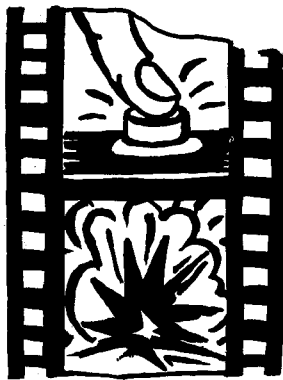
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THE MOVIES



OPENING

BLOOD GUTS BULLETS & OCTANE—A drama about used-car salesmen and a stolen car. Written, directed by, and starring Joe Carnahan. Opening April 9. (34th Street Showplace and Waverly.)

GO—A dark comedy about a Los Angeles drug deal that goes bad. Directed by Doug Liman. Opening April 9.

LOVERS OF THE ARCTIC CIRCLE—Two Spanish youngsters fall in love, separate, and find each other again in Finland. Directed by Julio Medem. In Spanish. Opening April 9. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

METROLAND—A romantic comedy about two English friends in the sixties who escape their suburban environment only to find them-

panic attacks at crucial moments, and Billy Crystal is the mild, bored little shrink who becomes his doctor and friend. What makes the film so effective is that the two men form a real bond—each fulfills some need in the other. Directed by Harold Ramis.—*David Denby* (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

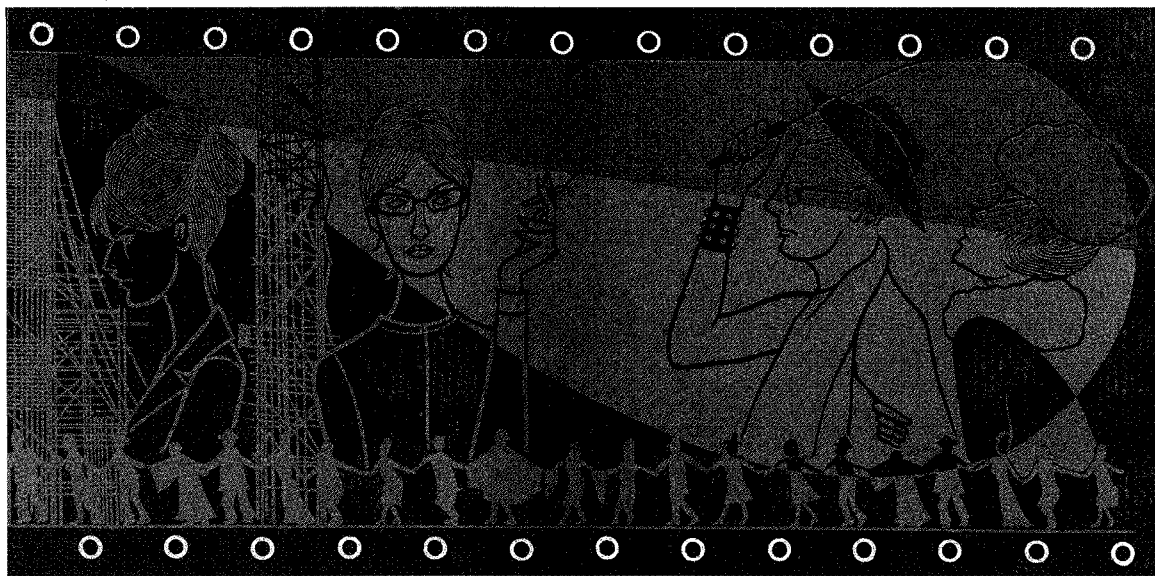
BLOW-UP (1966)—Michelangelo Antonioni conducts a leisurely tour of "swinging" London, lingering over a pot party and a mini-orgy, while ponderously suggesting that the mod scene represents a condition of spiritual malaise in which people live only for the sensations of the moment. Yet despite Antonioni's negativism, the world he presents looks harmless, and sex without "connecting" doesn't really seem so bad. The best part of the movie is an ingeniously edited sequence in which the fashion-photographer hero (David Hemmings) blows up a series of photographs and discovers that he has inadvertently photographed a murder. With Vanessa Redgrave, Sarah Miles, and Verushka.—*Pauline Kael* (A Different Light Bookstore; April 11.)

COOKIE'S FORTUNE—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Angelika Film Center, Beekman, Chelsea West, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

DIAL M FOR MURDER (1954)—Those who like drawing-room murder and cold, literate, gentlemanly skullduggery will find this film ingenious and almost entertaining. Ray Milland is the suitably suave husband who hires unsavory, penny-dreadful Anthony Dawson to kill his rich, unfaithful wife, Grace Kelly; he then calmly goes out for the evening with her lover, Robert Cummings.

who offers her a place to stay. In a sense, the film is little more than the brief history of their friendship; what fires it up, and takes it to the brink of greatness, is not only that Zonca registers every tremor of their competing emotions—the smiling blitheness of Isa, the inward fury of the beautiful Marie—but that the story travels so far. The film begins with a scuffed, documentary air that gradually deepens, almost without your noticing, into more serene moments of epiphany; the transition is beautifully handled by Bouchez and Régnier, who—quite rightly—shared the prize for Best Actress at the Cannes Film Festival last year. In French.—*Anthony Lane* (4/5/99) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

EDTV—At a slipping cable channel, two rancidly intelligent executives (Rob Reiner and Ellen DeGeneres) hold a contest, choose an appealing but ordinary guy—one Ed Peckurny (Matthew McConaughey), a video-store clerk in San Francisco—and put him on the air, live, twenty-four hours a day. The whole world watches and gets involved in Ed's life, which quickly resembles a soap opera. On the surface, this rambunctious comedy, which was written by Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, and directed by Ron Howard, is a satire of media ruthlessness and the public's hunger for instant fame. But it's so broadly conceived that it never achieves any distance from its subject. How can you put down the crass public and "expose" cynical TV executives when you're making a crude, populist, cynical movie? With Woody Harrelson as Ed's jerky older brother, Jenna Elfman as his girlfriend, Sally Kirkland and Martin Landau as his mother and stepfather, and a slinky, overheated Elizabeth Hurley as a model who throws herself at



Opening April 9, at the Paris Theatre, Federico Fellini's "8½."

selves back home years later. Directed by Philip Saville. Opening April 9. (Angelika Film Center and Eastside Playhouse.)

NEVER BEEN KISSED—A twenty-five-year-old reporter (Drew Barrymore) goes undercover as a high-school student. Directed by Raja Gosnell. Opening April 9. (Criterion Center, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.)

TWIN DRAGONS—Jackie Chan plays separated-at-birth twins in this 1992 adventure film, directed by Tsui Hark and Ringo Lam. Opening April 9.

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

ANALYZE THIS—You can see the jokes coming well in advance, but you still laugh. Robert De Niro is the mafia boss who is having

The unexpected happens: the wife dispatches her would-be assassin with scissors, so the determined husband goes to work to make the murder look premeditated. All this is related with Alfred Hitchcock's ghoulish chic, but everyone in it seems to be walking around with tired blood. Amusingly, John Williams, as the inspector who unravels the case, is so wryly, archly dexterous that he makes everybody else's underplaying look positively boisterous. Shown in 3-D.—*P.K.* (Film Forum 2; starting April 9.)

THE DREAMLIFE OF ANGELS—Erick Zonca's first feature is set in Lille, in northern France; it is tempting to read the whole movie as a rebuke to sunlit romances on the Côte d'Azur. The heroines are Isa (Elodie Bouchez), a free spirit who moseys around France with a rucksack, and Marie (Natasha Régnier), whom she meets in a clothing factory, and

Ed.—*D.D.* (3/29/99) (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

8½ (1963)—Fellini's celebrated autobiographical phantasmagoria. Guido (Marcello Mastroianni), the director-hero, is the center of the film's universe, the creator on whose word everything waits, the man sought after by everyone. He can do anything, and the possibilities confuse him. The multi-ringed circus of "8½" is such a luxuriously externalized version of an artist's inner life that it's more like the fantasy of someone who wishes that he were a movie director—someone who has soaked up those movie versions of an artist's life, in which in the midst of a carnival or a ball the hero receives inspiration and dashes away to transmute life into art. It's a de-luxe glorification

of creative crisis, visually arresting (the dark-and-light contrasts are extraordinary, magical) but in some essential way conventional-minded. The cast includes Anouk Aimée, Sandra Milo, Claudia Cardinale, and Barbara Steele. The score is by Nino Rota. In Italian.—*P.K.* (Paris; starting April 9.)

FOLLOWING—Director Christopher Nolan has given his first film a clever plot: an oddball writer sneakily follows strangers around town in hopes of inspiring his fiction. When he follows the wrong man (a thief), he's dragged into a scene far more complicated and sinister than he bargained for. The film has echoes of Hitchcock classics such as "Strangers on a Train," but Nolan's story is leaner and meaner than those thrillers. The black-and-white handheld camerawork allows the audience a voyeuristic kick, as if they were part of the crew following the director around. The movie works not only as an exercise in cheap, on-the-street filmmaking; its tense, well-plotted script gives it a real punch.—*Bruce Diones* (Film Forum.)

FORCES OF NATURE—A misfired attempt to jazz up Sandra Bullock's goody-goody image. Bullock plays a flaky sexpot flying to Savannah to visit the son she has neglected for years. Uptight Ben Affleck is travelling on the same plane, to his wedding (to Maura Tierney, in the dull girl-next-door role that often goes to Bullock). Bullock is refreshingly natural, as usual, but Affleck seems uncomfortable as the romantic lead—if she's light as a feather, he's stiff as a board. Marc Lawrence's implausible script and Bronwen Hughes's tin-ear direction do nothing to improve matters.—*Sarah Kerr* (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, State, and Union Square.)

THE GREATEST (1977)—Based on the autobiography credited to Muhammad Ali, his manager, Herbert Muhammad, and Richard Durham, this hunk of pop agitprop is too clumsy to work even as an inspirational sports legend. For rabid Ali fans, though, it presents the official big-screen minting of the great champ's myth. According to this movie, Ali was a high-spirited, naive young man who accepted his 1960 Olympic gold medal with a burst of patriotic pride but threw it away after degrading experiences with American racists. He achieves true greatness only after his conversion to Islam and his refusal to enter the war in Vietnam. In brief, incoherent fight clips, Ali is enthralling. Elsewhere he's funny and likable, but without the live-wire confidence that he's charged with in the ring. Tom Gries directed; Ring Lardner, Jr., wrote the script.—*Michael Sragow* (American Museum of the Moving Image; April 10-11.)

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL—Would that it were. The great, donkey-faced Italian clown Roberto Benigni attempts an ambitious fable of comedy's redemptive power. He plays an Italian Jew who keeps alive his little boy's innocence in a Nazi concentration camp by pretending that the routines of the camp are no more than an intricate game staged for his son's benefit. But Benigni's ironic counter-reality undermines this movie, not the Nazis, who were beyond ridicule for the same reason that they were beyond rationality. Totalitarianism makes the fantastic literal—that is its demonic appeal. Benigni's jokes and games just aren't enough, and you leave the movie thinking that what's touching is not Benigni's ministrations to the little boy but his own need to believe in comedy as salvation. With Giorgio Cantarini as the son, who has the heartbreaking quality of the children in the old neorealism movies. In Italian.—*D.D.* (11/16/98 and 3/15/99) (Angelika Film Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and 72nd Street East. . . ¶ Paris; through April 8.)

LOCK, STOCK AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS—This debut film from Guy Ritchie, a young English writer and director, was a big hit in Britain, though it's hard to see why. Four London lads owe half a million pounds to a man

with the subtle sobriquet of Hatchet Harry. Learning of an upcoming drug theft, they lie in wait and rob the robbers; all goes well until their fence, Nick the Greek (Stephen Marcus), unwittingly tries to sell the drugs back to the very person who owned them in the first place. It's a neat twist in a nicely wrapped plot; if only the rest of this flimsy film lived up to it.—*A.L.* (3/8/99) (BAM Rose Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE MATRIX—The Wachowski Brothers, the writer/director team who did such an outstanding job with the lesbian noir thriller "Bound," return in less than stunning form with this silly sci-fi fantasy starring Keanu Reeves. The dunderheaded script, about futuristic computers that control the planet, lacks any real mystery—it's basically warmed-over ideas from films like "Dune" and "The Terminator." The technical virtuosity—bullets fly through the air in slow motion, characters fight while walking on air—is dizzying, and depressing; with a decent script the film could have amounted to something.—*B.D.* (Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER (1958)—This straightforward account of the Titanic disaster, made by the English, has been generally ignored here. Eric Ambler's screenplay, derived from the book by Walter Lord, is well written in a solid, unsurprising way. You come out with a clear perception of what, according to the fairly reliable evidence of the time, actually happened. Roy Baker directed this shrewd, slick job of historical reconstruction, using two hundred actors; there are no big-star roles, but the movie is full of small dramas.—*P.K.* (Museum of Modern Art; April 13.)

READY TO WEAR (1995)—Robert Altman's roving eye trained on the world of fashion—it should have been a perfect match of style and subject, but Altman seems to have decided in advance that the subject was barely worth his attention. Set amid the anarchy of Paris fashion week, the movie is so well oiled that it never snags on anything substantial, and the huge ensemble cast is never put to the test. Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni are jokey and touching as long-parted paramours, but fine actors like Forest Whitaker and Lauren Bacall are wasted resources. A film that confines Tim Robbins and Julia Roberts to the bedroom is squandering its comic energies.—*A.L.* (Symphony Space; April 13.)

SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE—A ripely emotional comedy-fantasia—concocted by director John Madden and screenwriters Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard—of how Shakespeare came to write "Romeo and Juliet." In 1593, young Will (Joseph Fiennes), a stud with liquid eyes and full lips, is just an unhappy and unproductive hack, jealous of the greater Christopher Marlowe (Rupert Everett). At first the movie comes at us too broadly, with many facetiously anachronistic jokes about the grubby professional routines of the theatre. But Will falls in love with the fictional heiress Viola de Lesseps (Gwyneth Paltrow), and when these two poeticizing lovers climb into bed, and Shakespeare's quill begins to fly, the cleverness catches fire and "Shakespeare in Love" turns into an exciting literary-erotic entertainment. With Geoffrey Rush as the theatre manager Henslowe and Judi Dench as a supremely intelligent and wittily dominating Queen Elizabeth.—*D.D.* (12/21/98) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, Cinema II, Lincoln Square, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Ziegfeld.)

TRUE CRIME—Clint Eastwood's face has hardened into chiselled rock, his strong torso is now wrinkled, his voice is hoarse and bodiless. Yet at sixty-eight, Eastwood is a more forceful actor than he was twenty years ago—less opaque, less stylized, and altogether more idiosyncratic. He's too old and unsuited by temperament to play the tough city newspaper reporter in this film, but he still



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has an authority that few younger actors could match. The reporter, an ex-alcoholic, is selfish and faithless in many ways; he's given up on everything but the truth, and he sets about investigating the case of a convicted murderer (Isaiah Washington) on the day the man is set to be executed at San Quentin. The ending of the movie—in which the reporter drives madly to the governor's mansion as the execution commences—is an outrageous manipulation of the audience, but the rest of this melodrama,



At Film Forum, Christopher Nolan's "Following."

which Eastwood directed himself (Larry Gross, Paul Brickman, and Stephen Schiff adapted Andrew Klavan's novel), is enjoyably lowdown and melancholy. Shot in Oakland. With James Woods, Denis Leary, Diane Venora, and Lisa Gay Hamilton.—*D.D.* (3/29/99) (Coronet Cinemas, Criterion Center, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE UNDERGROUND ORCHESTRA—The Dutch filmmaker Heddy Honigmann trains her camera on the street and subway performers of Paris to find the poignant tales that lurk behind their tunes. It's a society of nomads in exile: a gentle army deserter from Sarajevo who plays a mean violin, a singer-songwriter who survived Mobutu's concentration camps in Zaire, a much tortured Argentine pianist whose fingers came within millimeters of his military captors' electric saw. Most of the musicians encountered remain largely anonymous, but several invite the viewer into their homes and their quirky private lives. Music is more than a profession for this rag-tag band: it's a lifeline, and the film accords it the respect it deserves, allowing pieces to play out in long, uninterrupted stretches. In French and Spanish. —*James M. Keller* (Film Forum.)

A WALK ON THE MOON—Reviewed this week in *The Current Cinema*. (Gotham Cinema, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

AFFLICTION (reviewed in our issue of 1/11/99): BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 59th Street East Cinema, and Village East Cinemas.... **AMONG GIANTS**: Union Square.... **CENTRAL STATION** (11/30/98): BAM Rose Cin-

emas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Quad Cinema.... **CHILDREN OF HEAVEN** (2/15/99): Village East Cinemas.... **THE CORRUPTOR**: 84th Street Sixplex, State, and Village Theatre VI.... **CRUEL INTENTIONS**: Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, 64th and 2nd, Union Square, and Waverly.... **DANCEMAKER**: Cinema 3rd Avenue.... **ELIZABETH** (11/16/98): BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Union Square.... **GODS AND MONSTERS** (11/9/98): 59th Street East Cinema, Quad Cinema, 62nd & Broadway, and 34th Street Showplace.... **HANDS ON A HARD BODY**: Village East Cinemas.... **HARD**: Cinema Village.... **THE HARMONISTS**: Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Village East Cinemas.... **THE MOD SQUAD**: 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 19th Street East 6, State, and Village Theatre VII.... **THE OUT-OF-TOWNERS**: First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.... **PAULINA**: Cinema Village.... **PAYBACK** (2/15/99): Worldwide Cinemas.... **PRINCE OF EGYPT**: Worldwide Cinemas.... **RELAX... IT'S JUST SEX**: Quad Cinema.... **RUSHMORE** (12/7-14/98): Art Greenwich Twin and Union Square.... **SAVING PRIVATE RYAN** (8/3/98): First & 62nd Cinemas and Union Square.... **THE SCHOOL OF FLESH**: Cinema Village.... **A SIMPLE PLAN**: Worldwide Cinemas.... **THE STICKY FINGERS OF TIME**: The Screening Room.... **TANGO**: Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.... **10 THINGS I HATE ABOUT YOU**: Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Union Square.... **200 CIGARETTES** (3/15/99): Worldwide Cinemas.... **WAKING NED DEVINE**: Worldwide Cinemas.... **YOU'VE GOT MAIL** (12/28/98 & 1/4/99): Worldwide Cinemas.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

NEW DIRECTORS/NEW FILMS—A festival of international films. April 7 at 6 and April 8 at 9: "Head On" (Ana Kokkinos; Australia).... April 7 at 9 and April 8 at 6 and 6:30: "Lovers of the Arctic Circle" (Julio Medem; Spain).... April 9 at 6 and 6:30 and April 11 at 8:30: "Sitcom" (François Ozon; France).... April 9 at 9 and 9:30 and April 10 at noon: "Twin Falls, Idaho" (Michael Polish; United States).... April 10 at 3 and April 11 at 6: "Leaf on a Pillow" (Garin Nugroho; Indonesia).... April 10 at 6 and April 11 at 3: "Trans" (Julian L. Goldberger; United States).... April 10 at 9 and April 11 at noon: "Xiao Wu" (Jia Zhangke; China). (Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. For information, call 708-9500.)

FILM FORUM 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through April 8: "Days of Heaven" (1978; Terrence Malick).... From April 9: "Dial M for Murder" (†).

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of films from Norway; in Norwegian, with English subtitles. April 7 at 2 and 6:30 and April 10 at 6:15: "The Other Side of Sunday" (1996, Berit Otto Nesheim).... April 7 at 4 and 8:45: "Only Clouds Move the Stars" (1998, Torun Lian).... April 8 at 2 and 6:15: "Death Is a Caress" (1949, Edith Carlmar).... April 8 at 4 and 8:30 and April 11 at 6: "Water Easy Reach" (1998, Bent Hamer).... April 9 at 2 and 6:15 and April 10 at 8:30: "Thrane's Method" (1998, Unni Straume).... April 9 at 4 and 8:30: "Schpaaa" (1998, Erik Poppe).... April 10 at 4, April 11 at 8:15, and April 12 at 4: "Frozen Heart" (1998, Stig Andersen and Kenny Sanders).... April 11 at 4 and April 12 at 2: "Gjest Bardsen" (1939, Tancred Ibsen).... April 10 at 2: "The Devil Doll" (1936, Tod Browning).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films featuring Edward G. Robinson. April 8 at 2:30 and April 12 at 6: "The Stranger" (1946, Orson Welles)....

April 9 at 2:30: "The Sea Wolf" (1941, Michael Curtiz).... April 12 at 2:30: "Little Caesar" (1931, Mervyn LeRoy).... April 13 at 2:30: "A Night to Remember" (†).... April 13 at 6: "Klute" (1971, Alan J. Pakula).

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—April 10 at 2 and April 11 at 4:30: "When We Were Kings" (1996, Leon Gast).... April 10 at 4 and April 11 at 2: "The Greatest" (†). **FLORENCE GOULD HALL**, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—April 13 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "L'Age des Possibles" (1996, Pascale Ferran; in French).

SYMPHONY SPACE, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—A program of films featuring Marcello Mastroianni. April 13 at 7: "Fantasma d'Amore" (1981, Dino Risi; in Italian).... April 13 at 8:45: "Ready to Wear" (†).

A DIFFERENT LIGHT BOOKSTORE, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On April 11 at 7, the feature will be "Blow-Up" (†).

JAPAN SOCIETY, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—A retrospective of films by Tai Kato; in Japanese, with English subtitles. April 9 at 6:30: "Oiwa's Ghost" (1961).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—April 8-9 at 6, 8, and 10 and April 10-11 at 4, 6, 8, and 10: "France Tour/Detour/Deux Enfants" (1978, Anne-Marie Miéville and Jean-Luc Godard; in French), a twelve-part television miniseries, shown in four sections.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

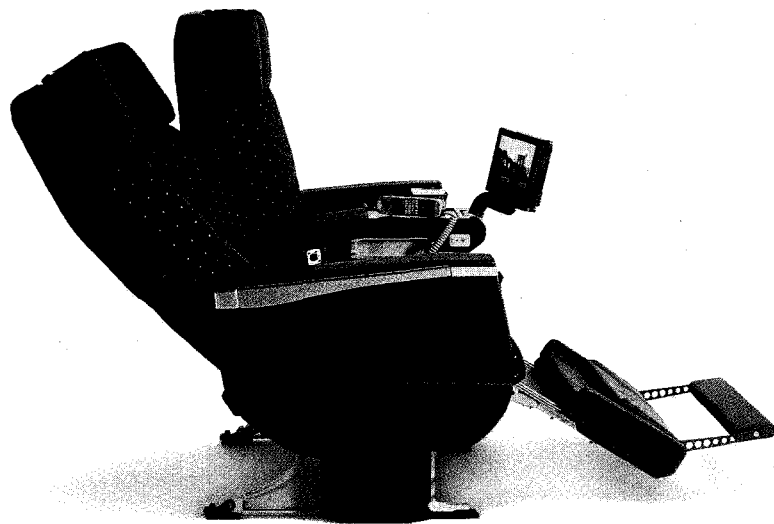
(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St.
ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM ROSE CINEMAS, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).

BEEKMAN, Second Ave. at 66th St.
CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd St.
CHELSEA WEST, 333 W. 23rd St.
CINEMA I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CINEMA II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
CORONET CINEMAS, Third Ave. at 59th St.
CRITERION CENTER, Broadway at 44th St.
EAST 85TH STREET, First Ave. at 85th St.
EASTSIDE PLAYHOUSE, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84TH STREET SIXPLEX, Broadway at 84th St.
86TH STREET EAST TWIN, Third Ave. at 86th St.
59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th St.
FILM FORUM, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).

FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd St.
GOTHAM CINEMA, Third Ave. at 58th St.
GUILD, 33 W. 50th St.
LINCOLN PLAZA CINEMAS, Broadway at 63rd St.
LINCOLN SQUARE, Broadway at 68th St.
METRO CINEMA I AND 2, Broadway at 99th St.
MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th St.
NEW YORK TWIN, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19TH STREET EAST 6, Broadway at 19th St.
OLYMPIA I AND II, Broadway at 107th St.
ORPHEUM VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
PARIS, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th St.
QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th St.
THE SCREENING ROOM, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd St.
64TH AND 2ND, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72ND STREET EAST, Third Ave. at 71st St.
STATE, Broadway at 45th St.
SUTTON I AND 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th St.
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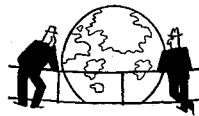
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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT

A war up in the air.



FIVE years ago, on the morning of April 7, 1994, ten Belgian soldiers serving with a United Nations peacekeeping mission in Rwanda were captured, tortured, murdered, and mutilated by Rwandan government forces. Then the Belgians' bodies were returned to their U.N. comrades. The government of Rwanda at that time had decided to kill every Rwandan whom it considered an "enemy"—a category that included the entire Tutsi minority group—and the U.N. presence was regarded as a potential hindrance. But the organizers of the genocide, having observed the habits of Western peacekeeping and intervention forces around the post-Cold War world, had concluded that killing a few peacekeepers might bring about the collapse of the entire U.N. mission.

The Rwandans were not mistaken. In fact, it was the Clinton Administration, still stinging from the loss of eighteen men in Somalia in October of 1993, that led the charge on the Security Council to abandon Rwanda. (Never mind that America had no troops in the U.N. force there, or that the Canadian force commander swore that with a free hand he could stanch the slaughter of hundreds of thousands.)

So a grim pattern emerged: as in Somalia and Rwanda, so, too, in Iraq and, for too long, in Bosnia, the reflex of the Clinton Administration

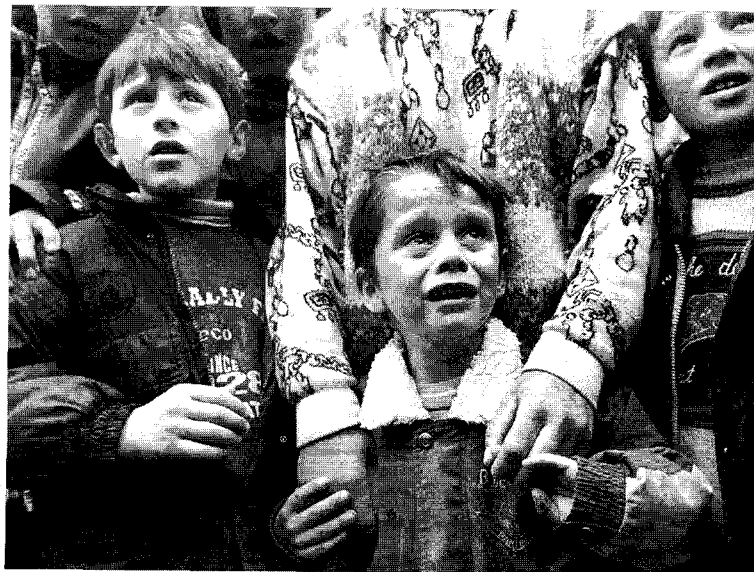
when it was confronted with military bullies—however extreme their domestic butchery or their threat to global stability and political sanity—was to duck and play for time. No two of these situations, or the conditions they presented for intervention, were alike, but the question was always the same: how can we—the world's great power—stand by, wringing our hands but refusing to act, as populations are threatened with mass destruction or outright destroyed? President Clinton himself seemed to encourage this question by apologizing for his policy of non-intervention in Rwanda and by maintaining the rhetorical claim that America's foreign policy was based not only on self-interest but on a broad foundation of moral concern for the collective good of humanity.

This was certainly Clinton's premise when he took us to war against Yugoslavia on March 24th. When he spoke of NATO's action as a bid to preserve our credibility, and to "protect thousands of innocent people in Kosovo from a mounting military offensive," we were obviously being asked to think of the

bombardment of Yugoslav targets as an effort to overcome the legacy of America's sleepwalking in Somalia, in Rwanda, and, for years, in Bosnia. Despite the humanitarian packaging, however, NATO's action was driven not by a decisive moral imperative, but by the fact that the Clinton Administration had got itself into a political corner. When Yugoslavia's President Slobodan Milosevic refused to accept the Rambouillet agreement, which would have required him, effectively, to surrender Kosovo, he forced Washington to make good its threat to bomb. Yet so far the air war against Yugoslavia has accomplished exactly what the American-led alliance flew into combat to prevent: our bombs unified the Serbs in Yugoslavia, as never before, behind the defiance of Milosevic; they spurred to a frenzy the "cleansing" of Kosovo's ethnic Albanians by Milosevic's forces; they increased the likelihood of the conflict's spilling over into Yugoslavia's south-Balkan neighbors; and they hardened the hearts of much of the non-Western world against us—not least in Russia, where passionate anti-

Americanism is increasing the prospects for the right-wing nationalists or the Communist Party to win control of the Kremlin and its nuclear arsenal in coming elections.

The Clinton Administration appears to have embarked on this war imagining that the first whiff of NATO grapeshot would make Milosevic submit to the ill-conceived Rambouillet agreement. Washington could not even say what would happen if Milosevic behaved like Milosevic and kept calling our bluff. The only



A family of refugees flees Kosovo for Albania.



"Good evening. In today's top story, my book has jumped to Number Three on the best-seller list."

thing Clinton did say for sure about his seat-of-the-pants prosecution of the war was that he would not send ground troops into Yugoslavia—a promise that amounted to declaring that NATO, afraid of sustaining casualties, was not as serious about fighting as Milosevic is. And last week, as frustration with the initial consequences of the war began to revive debate about ground forces, Milosevic's men captured three American soldiers and displayed them tauntingly on Belgrade television, as if to say, "Can you take it?"

The Clinton Administration and NATO responded by vowing more of the same—more weeks of more planes dropping more bombs on more targets—even though nobody in the Allied command, in Washington or Europe, was ready to say what an end (never mind a victory) might look like. Are we still committed to Rambouillet's terms of stopgap Kosovar autonomy, or do we now support Kosovo's independence as an Albanian statelet? Can we ever again accept Milosevic as a negotiating partner, or will we not be satisfied until we have reduced Yugoslavia to rubble? And then what? We need public clarification of these points. Such is the insidious logic of escalation that, once it is embarked upon, war becomes its own engine. We

are fighting now, it appears, because we have no idea when, or where, to stop.

It seems a cruel wrinkle of history that Clinton, who came of political age protesting the war in Vietnam, has got us into a new military bog. Already the passions aroused by the air campaign are fiery and divisive, cutting across predictable partisan lines—and we have yet to bring home any dead.

Curiously, one of the main currents of support for the professed aims of the war against Yugoslavia comes from the traditionally dovish camp of professional humanitarians and human-rights activists. After all, it is morally intolerable, and tantamount to complicity, to permit Milosevic to carry out his crimes against humanity in Kosovo; and the don't-just-stand-there-do-something response to the spectacle of great public wickedness is not only decent but hopeful. NATO's bombs, however, seem unable to save even a single Kosovar. Doesn't conscience then require that we ask whether the "something" we are doing is the right thing?

NATO's bind is clear: the Kosovo Albanians cannot protect themselves on the ground, and we cannot save them from the sky. That means that unless NATO combat troops are sent immediately to the rescue the total "cleansing" of

Kosovo will shortly be a fait accompli. The Clinton Administration must face this excruciating choice and declare its intent. That is the very least our leaders can do for the endangered people of the Balkans, and for all of us whom they ask to support their campaign in Yugoslavia. It is terrible to think that this war could end in a stalemate or in a Western retreat, leaving Milosevic unpunished for his crimes, and in a position to profit from them. Such an outcome would not only be ghastly for the Balkans; it might also be read as proof that moral imperatives and bonds of humanity cannot be served by our foreign policy. But that would be the wrong interpretation. Should this war continue to fail to bring safety or sanity to the Balkans, it will prove only that it was ill conceived and heedlessly prosecuted by an Administration that has treated moral argument as so much spin and bluster in a world plagued by neighborhood bullies. Shakespeare had a phrase for it: "The expense of spirit in a waste of shame."

—PHILIP GOUREVITCH

NEWS FROM HELL

Good friends are hard to find.



IN three years of working out of Sarajevo, shuttling between Serbia and Kosovo, I filled my Yugoslav address book with the names and phone numbers of democratic-minded people in Belgrade and Pristina—friends and colleagues, sources and foster families. Now that address book is a casualty list.

The pages relating to Pristina are suddenly out of date: the Kosovo that I knew and worked in is no more. I daily cross out the names of friends and acquaintances who have been killed, or have fled or are in hiding, addresses unknown. Perhaps the air strikes will be successful in punishing Slobodan Milosevic, but they aren't stopping the mass expulsions or the door-to-door killings.

Take Bajram Kelmendi. A big, burly man in his mid-fifties, with a headful of unruly dark curls, he always wore the same scruffy brown leather jacket. He was reputed to be the best human-rights lawyer in town. I met him in June, 1997,

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at a trial of Kosovo Albanians accused of terrorism. We had a heated argument about our mutual ignorance. He accused me of not knowing the local scene (he was right—I could speak hardly a word of Albanian); I accused him of snubbing the Western human-rights activists who witnessed the trial (the court was as kangaroo as they get). No bad feelings remained after this argument. On the contrary: whenever we met, I got a friendly wink from him, sometimes accompanied by a mock boxing stance. On March 25th, his body and those of his two sons were found, riddled with bullets, at a gas station outside Pristina. One report spoke of decapitation.

Fehmi Agani, a prominent politician who was on every Kosovo Albanian negotiating team, went to Bajram's funeral. Over the years, I had often sought his opinions about the Kosovo quagmire. A courteous, modest, and kind man, he never refused to speak Serbian, unlike most Kosovo Albanians. The day after the funeral, news circulated that Agani, too, had been executed. Then I learned that he may still be alive. So I call his home every day, hoping to hear his soft, deep voice, and I search the crowds on my television screen for a sight of his dove-white hair.

The day the air strikes started, the Pristina office of the Albanian-language newspaper *Koha Ditore* (Daily Times)—where I often traded my opinion pieces and Washington insights for a telephone

line—was demolished, and the guard at the front desk was shot dead. I worried about the safety of *Koha's* editor, Baton Haxhiu, whom I once delighted with a photocopy of an old *New Yorker* cartoon. (Couple in bed together. She to him: "It's O.K., hon, it happens. It even happened to NATO.") For days, rumors circulated that he had been executed. I've just heard that he, too, may be alive. It is impossible to confirm anything, because those who are still in Kosovo are unreachable and those who have made it out have only a fragmentary view of the exodus.

The Belgrade pages of my address book are also swiftly becoming unreliable, though under less dramatic circumstances. Phone numbers of embassies, airlines, and cultural centers are now mostly meaningless digits. Such places are closed down at best, ransacked at worst. My scribbled listings for Belgrade's opposition media are, for the moment, equally useless. Until the air strikes, the weekly news magazine *Vreme* (Time)—where I've downed many a slivovitz and contributed a piece or two—was full of independent reporting. I've covered plenty of stories alongside *Vreme* journalists; back in December, 1997, their star reporter and I travelled together to the heart of Kosovo Liberation Army territory. What censorship, imposed after the air strikes, is doing to *Vreme* is painful to see. It is now a skinny information bulletin; the first "war" issue contains instructions on what to take to the shelter.

I know why my friends are reduced to writing—and doing—this, but it's depressing all the same.

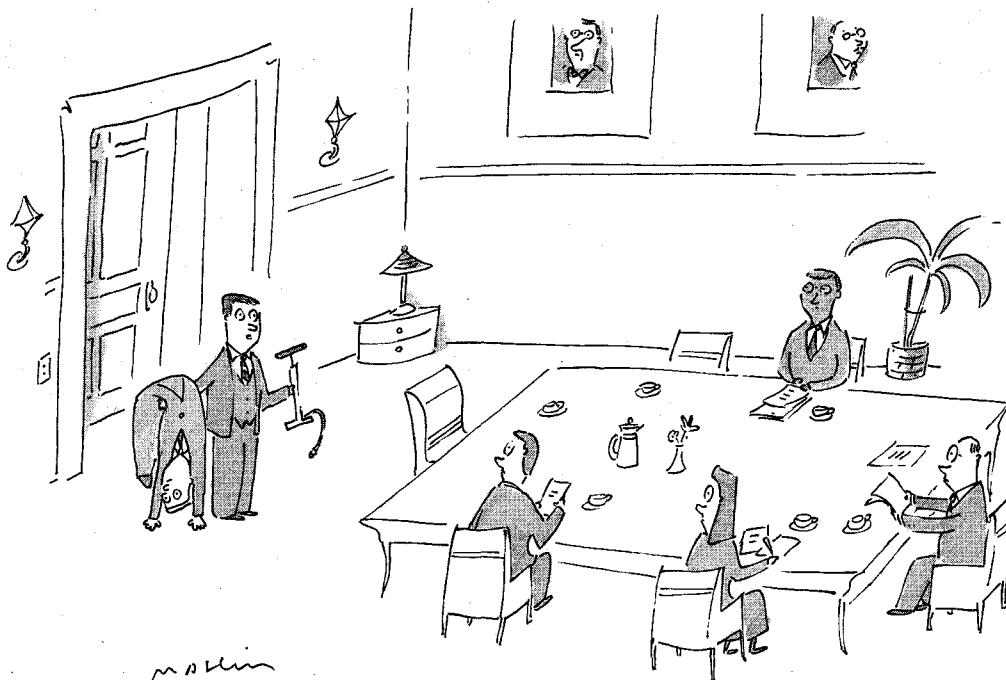
Belgrade's other main independent voice, Radio B92, was ordered off the air as soon as the air strikes were authorized, and now it can be accessed only through the Internet. I avidly read its dozen daily editions in Serbian, but this "clandestine" version is forced to toe the official line, too. There is little on the flow of refugees and nothing on the ethnic-cleansing campaign in Kosovo. Again, I think that under the circumstances doing otherwise would be suicidal, but the result is pitiful.

Some Serbs are fleeing out of fear of being drafted or detained, or simply out of disgust. As soon as the air strikes were announced, my two best Serb friends—both well travelled, both fluent English-speakers—joined other Belgraders in taking refuge in Sarajevo, which, paradoxically, is becoming a mecca for open-minded Serbs. Both my friends say that the NATO air strikes have had the result of wiping out all the opposition: "The liberal Serbia has gone into hiding."

One friend in Belgrade with whom I usually speak English switched to Serbian so as not to raise suspicion and said, "We spent years fighting for a better way, arguing that the way of the democratic West is the better way, and now the 'better way' bombs us!"

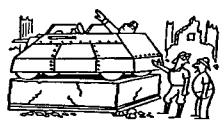
A lawyer who has been a kind of foster father to me in Belgrade is outraged at what he sees as the illegality of the NATO intervention. He is as critical as ever of Milosevic and chagrined to find himself in the same camp as the Yugoslav leader. During the past three years, he and I often spoke about Kosovo; he always thought that it should be "let go," as he put it. Now he wonders how any Serb can even hint at being willing to give it up.

Serb forces are applying a scorched-earth policy in Kosovo against ethnic Albanians. NATO's bombers are scorching the minds of the Serbs. Once this folly is over, there will be nobody to protect in Kosovo and nobody to deal with in Serbia. I fear I will have only blank pages in my Yugoslav address book. —ANNA HUSARSKA



"Please join me in welcoming and inflating our newest vice-president."

MIND-SETS

Beyond victimhood?

IN the months leading up to the current Kosovo horror, Slobodan Milosevic's hugely influential wife, Mirjana Markovic, steadfastly opposed any negotiated compromise over the province. According to a Markovic confidant cited last week in the *Times*, she believed that if she and her husband were, in effect, to give Kosovo away by signing a peace accord, their claim on power might be destroyed. On the other hand, even if the Serbs were to lose Kosovo in a war they would at least have established "the legal basis to reconquer it in one hundred years." More than half a century ago, Markovic's mother, an anti-Nazi partisan fighter, was captured and brutally interrogated by the Gestapo before being released; soon thereafter she was murdered by fellow-partisans, who suspected her of giving up names. Notwithstanding such a background, Markovic seems blithely willing to sentence her own grandchildren's grandchildren to more of the same misery. And, according to press reports out of Belgrade, her kind of resolutely bloody-minded determinism has been proving ever more wildly popular in the street.

Of course, that popularity owes much to the fact that the Milosevic regime has maintained a virtual stranglehold on the country's major media for more than a decade; in that time average Serbs have not been exposed to anything resembling a balanced—let alone minimally factual—account of developments in their region.

Yet surely something more is going on. Fascism is often represented as the dictatorial rule of a privileged few over the oppressed many, whereas it is almost always, at least at the outset, a profoundly majoritarian phenomenon—albeit a deeply antidemocratic one in terms of how the majority treats minorities. Ignazio Silone once characterized fascism as a counterrevolution against a revolution that never took place—a formulation that captures the ferociously paranoid and specifically anti-leftist cast of much of twentieth-century fascism, including Mussolini's and Hitler's. But a different aspect of the rise of Nazism, in particular, seems more pertinent to

MORE SNOW FALLING

One huge hush the whole day.
No wind. Just endless inexorable cliché,
the same old stuff again

and again.... We need old stuff
sometimes. As in liturgy.
Or a declaration of love.
No frills, just infinity.

—PETER KANE DUFAULT

the sort of fascism that we're seeing today. This kind of fascism draws most of its strength from a sense of historic grievance and of the nation-as-misunderstood-victim—a national self-pity zealously husbanded, nurtured, and sustained from one generation to the next in a process that often seems to verge on the pathological.

This is what we seem to be dealing with in Serbia, a country whose overriding foundation myth, far from celebrating a triumph, glorifies a six-hundred-year-old botched defeat, one that continues to cry out for vengeance. In Belgrade this past week, people who couldn't get over the horror of having to spend a few nights in shelters seemed defiantly oblivious of the far more gruesome fate being visited upon hundreds of thousands of Kosovars, let alone of their own role in that fate. *What was wrong? Why couldn't everybody see that the Serbs alone were the victims?*

Serbs are not the only Balkan people who evince this sort of mind-set. Croats, obsessively nursing grievances of their own, have proved just as unabashedly indifferent to the fate of the hundreds of thousands of Serb refugees who were expelled from their homes in the Krajina at the end of the Bosnian conflict.

It's not as though people in this region have historically been incapable of living together. Through most of their history they did just that; the rate of ethnic intermarriage in cities like Sarajevo was almost a third in the last years before the war. Rather, it's that to the extent that they thought of themselves as Serbs or Croats or Kosovars or Bosnian Muslims—or suddenly started thinking of themselves that way all over again—their core identity arrived pickled in the brine of historic victimhood. Once they

got started, these people were not only unable to forget the past; they could scarcely think of anything else. Grievances half a century and even half a millennium old remained so vivid that, as was occasionally noted, it was as if the living had been transformed into shades haunting the far more substantial ghosts of the distant past, rather than the other way around.

Slobodan Milosevic and his cohort bear the overwhelming responsibility for fomenting the calamity we are now witnessing. In a cynical grab for power, and through the expert use of propaganda and other fascist methodologies, they whipped the people into a frenzy. But societies that luxuriate in a sense of victimhood make themselves vulnerable to such manipulation. It's inevitable that, from time to time, history is going to toss up power-hungry opportunists eager to exploit that weakness.

Yet the susceptibility to such opportunists is hardly inevitable: the tendency toward an endlessly self-pitying sense of victimhood is not some sort of inescapable genetic inheritance. Individuals can change, and so can entire societies. It's one thing to nurse blood vendettas in an era of knives and pistols—something altogether more fearsome to do so in a time of tanks and mortars and mines and dive-bombers. Today the Balkan myths—and especially the Serbian myths—invariably exalt the bloody heroes who went down fighting, calling forth vengeance upon their enemies for all eternity. Those are the stories that persist. And that is the ethos that will have to change.

What sort of stories will people in the Balkans be telling each other a hundred years from now? Will Markovic's ghost—or, perhaps, the ghost of her Albanian counterpart, because a Kosovar defeat could as easily call forth its own undying dreams of vengeance—prove more corporeal than her living descendants? Will there even be any living descendants in that blasted land? (Can anyone doubt that across the next century tanks and mines are likely to be replaced by hijacked nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons?) Or will the Balkan peoples have achieved a new way of being—one that somehow marries accountability and forgiveness, that glories in tolerance and the blessedly human capacity for starting something anew?

—LAWRENCE WESCHLER

POLITICS AS USUAL

A carrot-and-stick problem for New York's legislators.



LAST Wednesday, the members of the New York State Legislature got paid. This is not likely to happen again for quite some time. Only the legislature has the power to dock its own pay, and it committed itself to this unusual step back in December, at the same time that it voted its members a salary increase of almost forty per cent. The increase brought the lawmakers' annual base pay up to seventy-nine thousand five hundred dollars, although most of them actually earn considerably more than that, thanks to what are known as "lulus"—special payments for committee work. At the time, legislators justified the size of the raise by noting that it was the first salary hike they had awarded themselves in a decade.

The ten-year wait and the voluntary pay suspension are, it turns out, related. The legislature's primary responsibility is to put together the state budget each spring. For fifteen years in a row, however, through good times and bad, through surpluses and deficits, through Republican administrations and Democratic ones, the legislature has failed to pass a budget by the start of the state's fiscal year, on April 1st. Expectations had been beaten down so far that when, last April, lawmakers approved a budget only fourteen days after the legal deadline it was considered virtually on time. In 1996, they were a hundred and four days late, and in 1997 a hundred and twenty-six. Thus, while the lawmakers' vote to dock their own pay was primarily a public-relations gesture, it was also, in part, a penance: they voted to stop paying themselves for as long as the budget was delayed. (The lawmakers' salaries will be held in escrow in the interim.)

But it is not clear that anyone devoted much thought to the practical impact of the pay hiatus, which is probably unprecedented in American political history—and perhaps for good reason. The very fact that the new arrangement places such direct, not to say crassly material, pressure on legislators makes it a bit tricky for them to respond to it. An on-time budget this year

could have been a huge embarrassment for the legislators, confirming cynical suspicions that in Albany there is only one special-interest group whose interests really matter. But missing the budget deadline yet again, in spite of the new measure, can hardly be said to redound to the legislature's credit.

As the pay suspension kicked in last week there was no evidence that it was having any effect. After nearly shutting down the state government in a contretemps over financing a huge run in Lake Placid, lawmakers passed their by now routine emergency appropriations bills and headed off on a twelve-day vacation. Discussion on the budget had not even progressed beyond the basic question of how much money there is to spend. (Debate was probably not advanced when the Democratic Assembly Speaker publicly accused the Republican Senate Majority Leader of being "a wimp.")

The cost of the annual budget delays to New Yorkers is real. As lawmakers wrangle, school boards, municipalities, and non-profit agencies that depend on state aid are left to guess at how much assistance they will ultimately receive. Not infrequently, they are forced to take out loans and, occasionally, even to cut staff.

But the costs are, for the most part, incremental and diffuse, and journalists have in the past had to struggle to give the story any real sense of human drama. If the legislators accomplish nothing else by docking their own pay, they will at least have succeeded this year in giving the budget story a human face: their own. —ELIZABETH KOLBERT

CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPT.

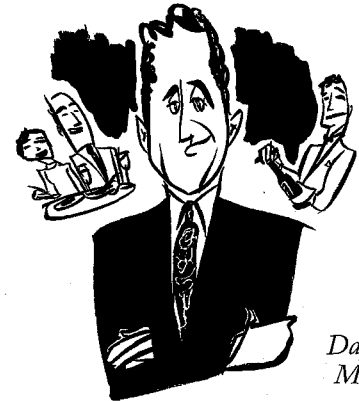
A Manhattan restaurateur's small-town approach to headhunting.



WHEN Danny Meyer opened his first restaurant, Union Square Café, in 1985, hiring help was easy: all he had to do was run an ad in the *Times*, and two hundred and fifty eager would-be servers lined up around the block. But by the time Meyer was ready to staff his two new restaurants, Tabla and Eleven Madison Park, newspaper ads were drawing

only about twenty applicants a shot.

"A lot of the classic pool of people, who go into restaurant work as a halfway point between their schooling and getting the job they ultimately want, are finding that they can go directly from school to that job," Meyer explained the other day. So, instead of advertising in



Danny Meyer

the newspaper, Meyer tried polling a narrower demographic. He put a notice in the newsletter that he sends out twice a year to the Union Square Café's core patrons, inviting recommendations for "caring and knowledgeable individuals" by whom they would like to be served. About two hundred readers responded. "We heard from relatives, rabbis, professors, business associates," Meyer said. Eventually, he hired about twenty-five new waiters and maître d's this way. (Meyer did get one letter from a competitor accusing him of poaching.)

The chief advantage of a customer-selected wait staff is that regular diners feel they have a personal investment in the restaurants. "When you pay the customers the compliment of hiring someone they love, you can't get them out of the restaurant," said Meyer. The other week, a couple of Meyer's regulars were having dinner at Tabla, and, he says, "they were like proud parents when I told them that someone they had suggested had just been promoted to a manager at Gramercy Tavern."

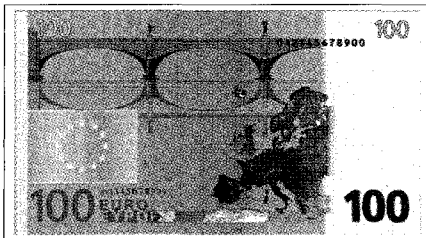
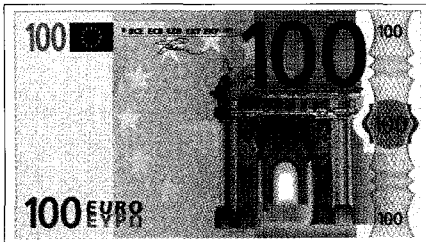
The disadvantage of personal recommendations is that, if a suggestion is rejected, Meyer runs the risk of alienating the patron. "There is one customer, somebody's grandmother, who calls me every three months and asks me when I am going to hire her grandson. She is a dear old lady. But every time she comes in she is more interested in talking about her grandson than she is in the menu."

—REBECCA MEAD

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM BACHTEL

TRAVEL ADVISORY

MAKING SENSE OF THE EURO



Future €100 note would currently be worth about \$108 U.S.

LEARN WHAT EUROPE'S NEW CURRENCY IS ALL ABOUT. YOU MAY EVEN SAVE MONEY ON YOUR NEXT TRIP.

by Paul Burnham Finney

The last time Europe had a common currency was during the Roman Empire. Back then, emperors had gold and silver coins struck for the entire realm to remind the vanquished of their rulers' power and influence. Two thousand years later, Europe still has plenty of coins around—and even paper notes—to make citizens as proud as Romans, but the denominations are in francs, guilders, lire, pesetas, and other currencies issued by more than a dozen nations.

That won't last much longer. In a monetary revolution that reflects a remarkably conciliatory spirit, eleven European countries have agreed to surrender their old currencies and adopt the euro as a common currency. To strengthen their economies, they are finally giving up a bit of the sovereignty they protected during the nearly fifty years it took to create a common market. The euro is the catalyst that will make a unified Europe, or what has been referred to as a United States of Europe, an economic and political reality.

POCKET CHANGE

For tens of thousands of American travelers heading for "Euroland," a nickname for countries that have adopted the euro (the French call it Zone Euro), the new money will constitute a change for the better. It will make traveling in Europe simpler and often cheaper. And incidentally, it is a fitting monetary overture to the new millennium.

You will find that many—but not all—of the European countries you like to visit are in the eleven-nation euro zone—more formally known as the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) of the fifteen-nation European Union (EU). They include Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, (the principality Monaco is monetarily linked with France), Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, and The Netherlands. Yet to join the euro bloc are EU members Denmark, Greece, Sweden, and most notably Britain.

Officially introduced on January 1st of this year, the euro is already a bargain. With European economies weakening, the new currency has declined from the \$1.17 that it cost to buy one euro at its debut to about \$1.08 at press time—quite an attractive turn of events

for travelers long accustomed to coping with a lackluster dollar.

ONE SIZE FITS ALL

The real payoff will come when euro bills and coins begin circulating in 2002. Instead of having to negotiate francs, lire, marks, pesetas and other European currencies—a test of your amateur skills as a foreign-exchange trader—travelers will pay their way around Euroland in euros, just as Americans use dollars in all fifty states. One currency conversion—at the airport or hotel—will fit all. That alone will eliminate the niggling fees for changing money as you travel around the Continent.

Hoping to make the transition to the euro easier, The European Union has formulated a three-stage plan: Introduce the currency, then put euro bills and coins in circulation on January 1, 2002, and finally, make the full conversion to the euro the

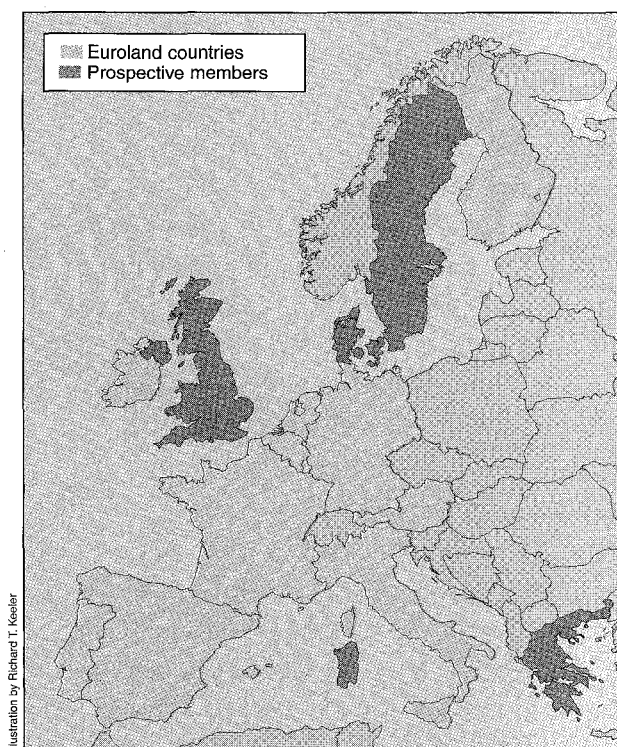


Illustration by Richard T. Kessler

Euroland's eleven nations will fully adopt the euro in 2002—with Britain, Denmark, Greece, and Sweden likely to follow their lead.

BR A V O

Spain



"Las Meninas" (detalle), Museo del Prado, Madrid

A 341 year old little girl.

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following July 1st. During those last six months, you will probably be carrying a jumble of currencies in your wallet or purse—dollars, euros and, say, francs if you're in Paris. (There will be nostalgic regrets, no doubt, as the Italians watch their lire turn into memorabilia.)

COMFORT IN THE EURO ZONE

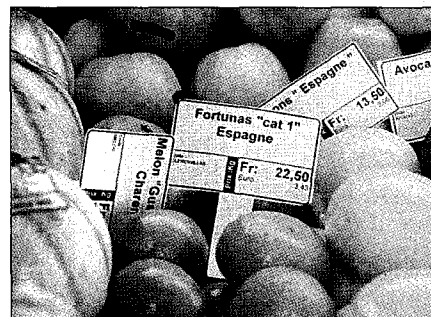
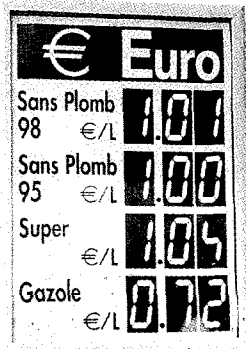
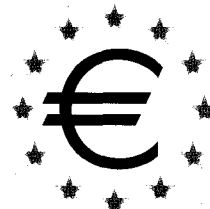
Right now, during the walk-up to 2002, the euro is a currency mostly used for keep-

ing track of transactions and getting travelers and consumers to think in a new way. The learning process is somewhat like making the mental switch from miles to kilometers.

European businesses already employ the euro to electronically register the billions of dollars worth of paperless transactions that occur daily across

Europe. (Not always easy, considering that few computers have the euro sign—an "e" with two horizontal bars—on their keyboards.) Even companies in Britain, which has not yet officially agreed to replace pound sterling with euros, are using the currency for accounting and invoicing.

During the extended transition to the euro, however, visitors may find the new money puzzling. "I started to see it last year on price tags in shop windows near the Galeries Lafayette—even before the euro became official," says Karen Preston, an American who is a frequent visitor to Paris. "Blouses, placemats, shoes, toasters—all priced in francs and euros. It was pretty confusing at first." Dan Norton, who runs a clothing store in London's Soho and often visits the Continent observes, "You're seeing dual pricing all over France; menu prices are sometimes both in francs and euros."



On Paris streets, the euro makes its debut where vendors sell their wares. Above: Gas at the pump in francs and euros.

Photos this page: Kelly Yazmar

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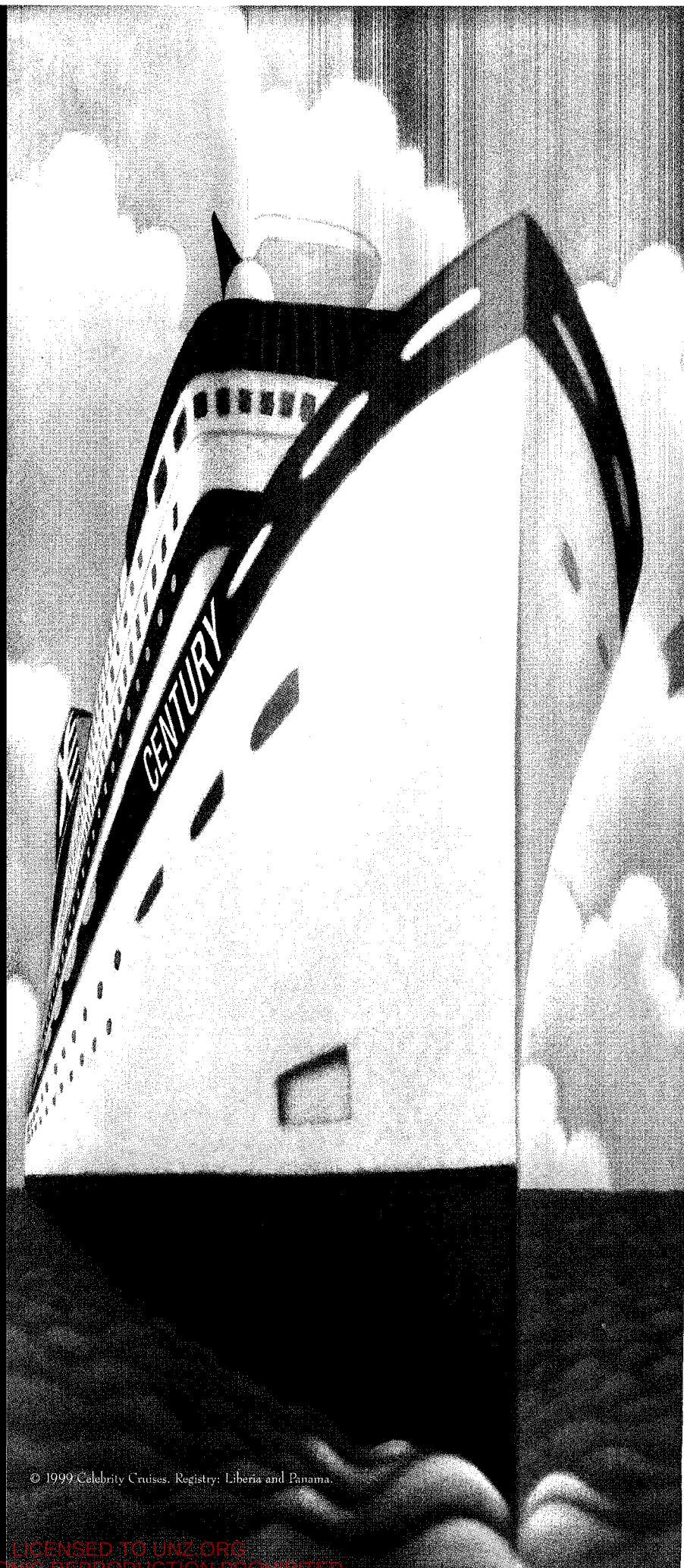


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SOFT ON GUIDELINES

Though it's on price tags, hotel bills, and foreign-currency tables in newspapers and *cambios*, the dual pricing is voluntary under the European Union's soft guideline of "no compulsion and no prohibition."

Sometimes you see two prices, sometimes not. Early in January, a Dublin pub was quoting "Grumpy Jack's Euro Pints" in two currencies—for instance, Guinness at 2.15 Irish

pounds/1.67 euros. Last month, France's SNCF began printing rail tickets in both local currencies and euros—with German, Italian, and other railways likely to follow suit. But companies like Europe by Car are continuing to sell prepaid car-rental packages in dollars—with hardly a euro in sight, even on the final rental contract.

It is the European Union's hope that by 2002 you'll feel comfortable thinking in euros. Says Douglas Smith at the London office of American Express, "The euro is filtering through." The EU wants visitors to be acclimated to the change when the euro goes into circulation. "People will

gradually switch onto it," he says confidently.

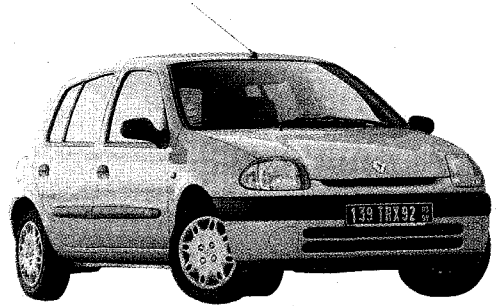
'COOL BRITANNIA'

The concept of replacing old money with euros has not yet won the hearts and minds of all the EU members. A significant holdout is Britain—"Cool Britannia," as Prime Minister Tony Blair calls it.

But even Britain now appears to be shifting gears. Depending on the outcome of a national euro referen-

dum, Britain could be heading for membership in the EU's Economic and Monetary Union within the next two or three years. Top London stores like Marks & Spencer continue to quote prices in pounds, but like the financial houses in the City of London, they're keeping accounts in euros behind the scenes as though Britain were already part of Euroland.

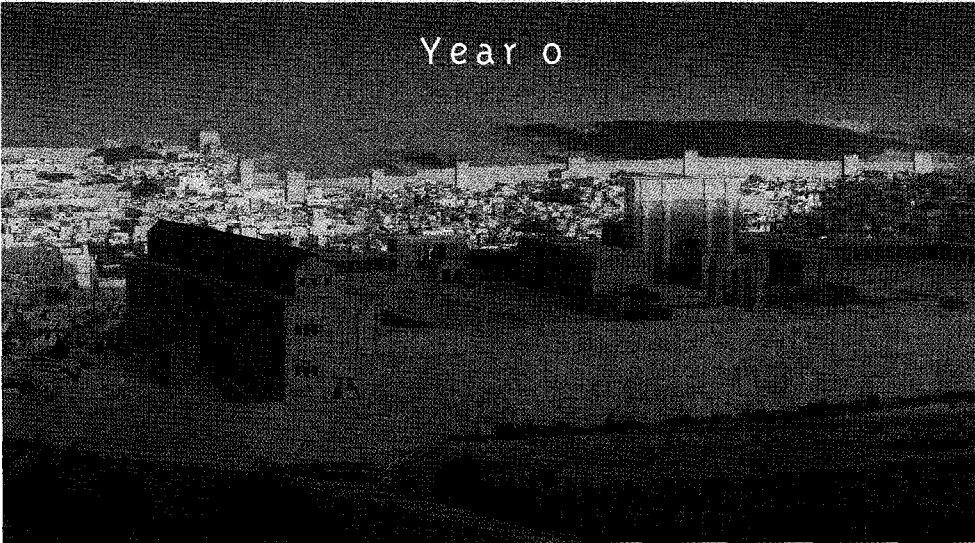
"We'll catch up eventually," a neatly attired shoemaker at John Lobb, a Jermyn Street boutique, said with a smile when a customer asked about paying in euros for a \$1,350 pair of



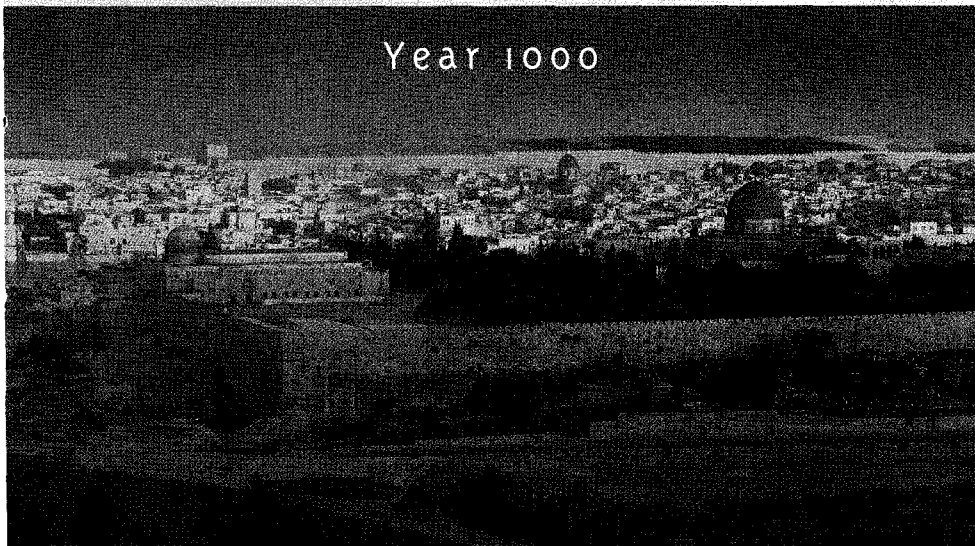
It's commerce as usual in plastic or pounds at London's Harrods, until Britain joins Euroland. Above: One of Renault Eurodrive's latest models for touring the Continent.

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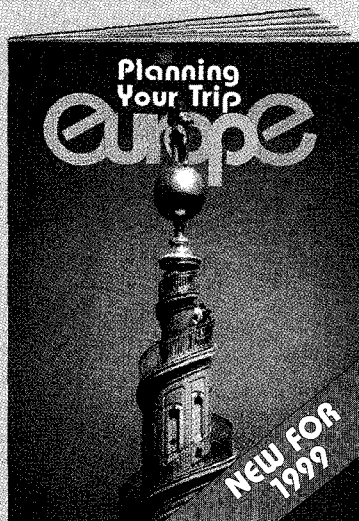
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hand-stitched Dodero shoes. Peter Willasey of Harrods, where pound sterling is a pillar of retailing, concedes, "Our new electronic point-of-sale equipment will be able to handle euro transactions when the notes and coins are in general circulation."

USER-FRIENDLY CURRENCY

At the level of international finance, the euro already ranks as one of three major regional currencies in the world, along with the dollar and yen.

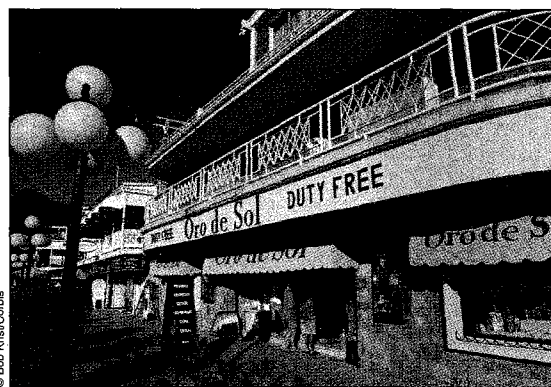
At street level, the euro should prove to be a traveler's friend. As a currency that has nearly a one-on-one relationship to the dollar, it makes figuring prices and costs incredibly easy. For example, passengers on Celebrity Cruises' and Orient Lines' ships will find plenty of prices posted in user-friendly euros when they go ashore to sightsee and shop this summer at such European ports as Amsterdam, Lisbon, Málaga, Barcelona, Cannes, and Portofino.

Is there anything startlingly new about traveling in a euro-ized Europe? "It's just like it used to be," says Joseph E. Buhler, chairman of the European Travel Commission, a trade organization that promotes travel by Americans to twenty-nine European countries. "Go in with plastic and charge. You'll get the best rate. And the dollar has been very strong against the euro."

"When the full conversion comes," he adds, "it will make travel less expensive. You won't have to convert money from one country to another. And it will be easier to compare prices—with everything posted in euros."

THE DUTY-FREE DRILL

When it comes to duty-free shopping in Euroland, most



When you fly out of Euroland—to the U.S. or any other non-euro country—you can still load up at a duty-free shop.

of the good times will roll on. Flying home from Madrid or Helsinki? Or combining a European trip with a visit to Tel Aviv as some fifteen per cent of visitors to the Holy Land do? Yes, you can load up on

perfumes, scotches, liqueurs, and scarves on your way to Israel. Whether you consciously realize it or not, you're

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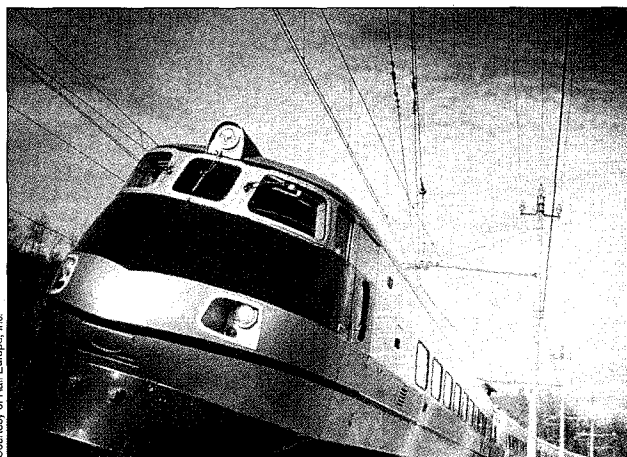
simply leaving the eleven-nation Euroland for another country.

However, for commuters between two EU countries, tax-free shopping will come to an end this June 30th, according to a controversial ruling by the EU. For example, the duty-free shop in Rome's Leonardo da Vinci Airport will not process your purchases and deliver them to your plane if your boarding pass shows you are flying to Amsterdam or any other city that is part of the EU.

In any case, long before the euro's arrival, savvy American travelers regarded duty-free shopping largely as a convenience for buying last-minute gifts. Many shops in major cities sell goods at prices that undercut those at duty-free shops, and astute comparison shoppers know whether or not an airport item is a true bargain.

AU REVOIR TO OLD MONEY

With money's power to move goods and services, the introduction of the euro amounts to a revolution in the way Europe looks at itself and the way travelers look at Europe.



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When traveling in Euroland, you will increasingly find airfares and train fares, as well as prices at stores, restaurants, hotels, and car-rental agencies, quoted in both euros and national currencies. By agreement among the eleven Euroland countries, their respective currencies have a fixed value vis-à-vis the euro. So now when you buy escudos, francs, guilders, or other EMU currencies (now essentially "denominations" of the euro), the rate you get depends on daily fluctuations between the euro and the dollar. For example, if the dollar gains 3.7 per

cent against the euro, it will gain by the same percentage against any one of the eleven national currencies. Thus, there will be no advantage for anyone touring the Continent to pay in lire rather than euros—or vice versa.

If you book a flight from Munich to Rome on Lufthansa, you can have your ticket written in either euros or marks, and it would make no difference in the cost. But if you buy a ticket from, say, London to Amsterdam on British Airways, your choice of having a ticket written in pounds or euros could matter, depending on the fluctuating exchange rates between the two currencies.

The value of dwelling on such minuscule advantages, however, is questionable if you're a busy traveler who cares more about saving time than money. And the options may be

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"Travel Advisory" MAKING SENSE OF THE EURO

- Currently, this many European countries have adopted the new euro as a common currency.
A) 8 B) 13 C) 11
- Euro bills and coins will be introduced into circulation on what date?
A) January 1, 2002 B) July 1, 2002
C) January 1, 1999
- What country has yet to determine whether they will participate in the new common currency?
A) Germany B) Spain C) Britain

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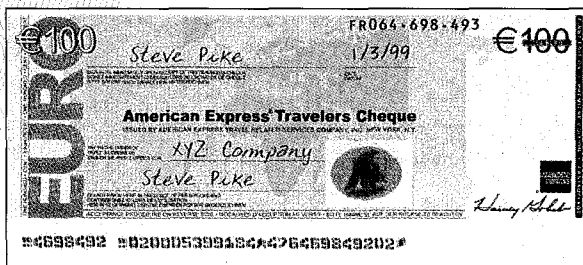


academic for those who book their travel arrangements in the U.S. before heading to Europe. If you buy a Eurailpass in the U.S. from Rail Europe, for example, you will be paying in dollars anyway.

REALITY CHECKS

Will there be anything close to real euro money during the transition to final conversion in 2002? American Express and other financial institutions already issue euro-denominated travelers checks. If you are betting that later this year the euro will strengthen against the dollar during your travels in Europe, it would obviously be wise to purchase such travelers checks (if, in fact, you want to safeguard your funds in that form of currency).

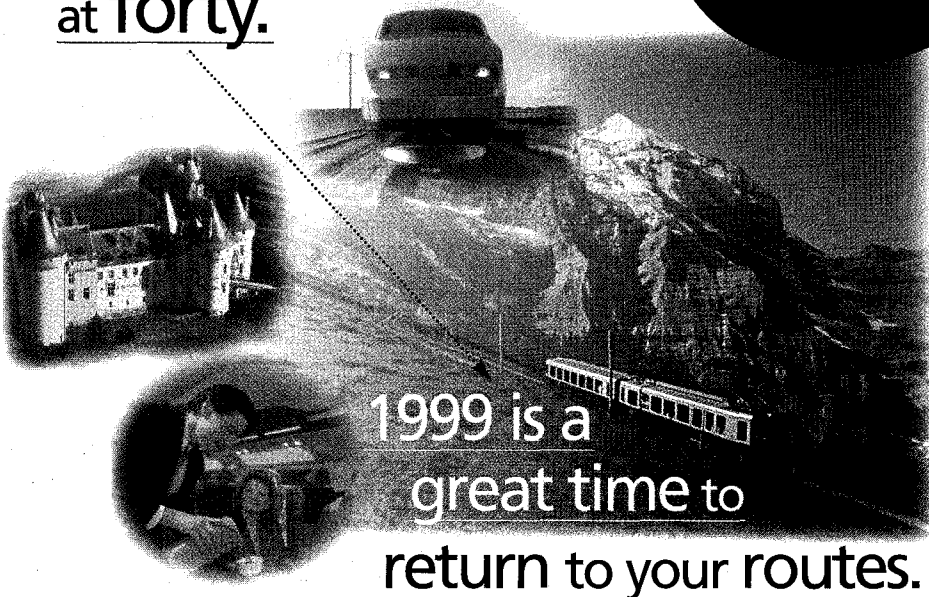
Euro travelers checks also have the advantage of providing fixed-rate access to eleven currencies, which you will be able to exchange for euros for a small handling fee. Are the checks popular? "We've seen a few customers pay with euro travelers checks," says a floor manager at Fortnum & Mason in London.



Euro-denominated travelers checks are the only euro currency now in circulation.

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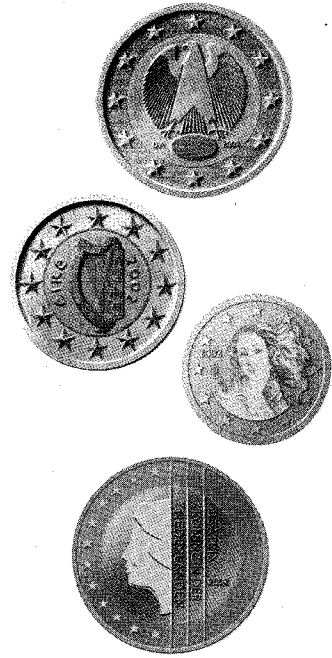
*Discount applies to Eurailpass, Eurail Flexipass, Eurail Saverpass and Eurail Saver Flexipass.



OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

About two-and-a-half years from now, billions of dollars worth of euro bills and coins will enter Europe's consumer mainstream. In anticipation of this currency explosion—what many Europeans call "the big bang"—well-guarded facilities are minting and storing the new currency. Watching over the new euro is a new central bank, similar to the U.S. Federal Reserve, which—in deference to Germany, the strongest economic power in Europe—is located in Frankfurt. Euro coins will be available in eight denominations from one cent to two euros. One side of the coins will have a map of the European Community. The other side? Because currency has a way of firing passions as well as filling bank accounts, the design of euro coins has led to some nationalistic flare-ups. In a gesture of ecumenicalism, EU members have permitted euro participants to design the other side of its coins. This will leave Europeans and travelers coping with nearly forty different euro coins.

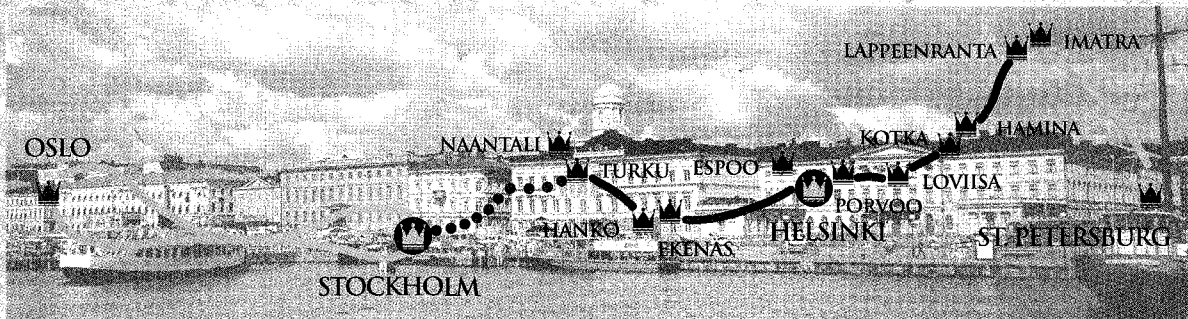
Ah, but the artistry in the coinage. The Netherlands will have the face of Queen Beatrix, Spain a likeness of King Juan



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Carlos, Ireland a harp with the word "Eire," and Germany an eagle in flight. At one stage, the Vatican riled France when it proposed putting the papal image on Italy's coins. Italy chose Botticelli's "Venus," which will appear on the euro's ten cent piece.

Settling on the design of euro paper currency has been a more benign process. The EU has elected to adorn its paper bills with an assortment of romanticized bridges, monuments, and gateways that illustrate the major style periods of European architecture.

TRANSPARENT ADVANTAGES

For travelers, the euro's main impact is the way it will make costs and prices much more "transparent" (to use a new buzz word favored by economic analysts). In pre-euro times it was difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain the precise differences between hotel rates in, say, Bruges and those in Florence because of daily variations in currency exchange rates between different countries. Ditto when it came to comparing restaurant prices or the cost of goods.

In a recent report on the euro that examined the virtues of transparency, the British Treasury pointed out that clothing is often more expensive in one country than in another. There can be wide variations in the price of a popular soft drink, and a pack of four leading-brand AA batteries can cost over twice as much in one part of Europe as it does in another.

"The euro will highlight these differences," the Treasury brief concludes, "so prices are likely to come under downward pressure, making it easier to find value for money—for businesses and consumers alike." In short, it will be easier to tell whether a silk scarf costs more in Milan's Galleria than in Le Printemps in Paris, or whether a room at the Palace in Madrid is cheaper than a comparable one at the Amigo in Brussels.

In The Leading Hotels of the World 1999 directory, which includes a reservation service for such opulent palaces as the Vier Jahreszeiten in Hamburg and Crillon in Paris, rates are given in both euros and local currencies for many of its European hotels. According to Cristina Ampil, director of lodging research at PricewaterhouseCoopers, hotel rates may be reduced in the years ahead as properties attempt to become more competitive. As the euro's influence sinks in, prices are likely to come more into line with one another.

There will continue to be islands of old-fashioned pricing, such as car-rental costs, which vary widely between countries

because of differing taxes, fleets, and services. But all in all, the shakeup caused by the euro should prove to be a boon for travelers.

YOUR MONEY'S WORTH

Historically, new currencies have come and gone, washed away by weak economies that failed to back them up. Even ancient Rome experienced severe inflation as it began its decline. And so, the euro's strength will depend upon the economic well-being of Euroland. Money, to some extent, is worth whatever you think it's worth, and ultimately that is reflected in its value on foreign-exchange markets. But money is perceived to be worth more if the economic activity it represents is stable and growing.

Statistically—in terms of gross national product, population, and other factors—the eleven-nation Euroland bears a remarkable resemblance to the United States. The dollar began replacing U.S. state currencies in the mid-nineteenth century. Already 290 million strong, Euroland will get even bigger (if not necessarily more powerful) with the addition

of prospective members such as the Eastern European countries, as well as the four EU members outside of Euroland.

"There's a long line of applicants for European Union membership, a prerequisite for single currency participation," says Christopher Matthews, an EU spokesperson. Britain's expected entrance in the euroclub will certainly give the new currency a significant lift. There's a belief this will occur before euro notes and coins begin circulating.



To help the French and the rest of us adjust to the new currency, women's pumps in a Parisian boutique come in euros and francs.

of a major global currency. Will it turn out to be a rival of the dollar? Will the euro gain additional prestige as a so-called reserve currency? It's certainly possible. But as an official at the New York Federal Reserve Bank (whose vaults are stacked with gold) recently put it, "Two-thirds of all U.S. currency in circulation is overseas." On that basis alone, if there is a currency competition, the dollar will be a formidable rival.

(Paul Burnham Finney is a New York-based journalist who tracks developments in the European Union.)

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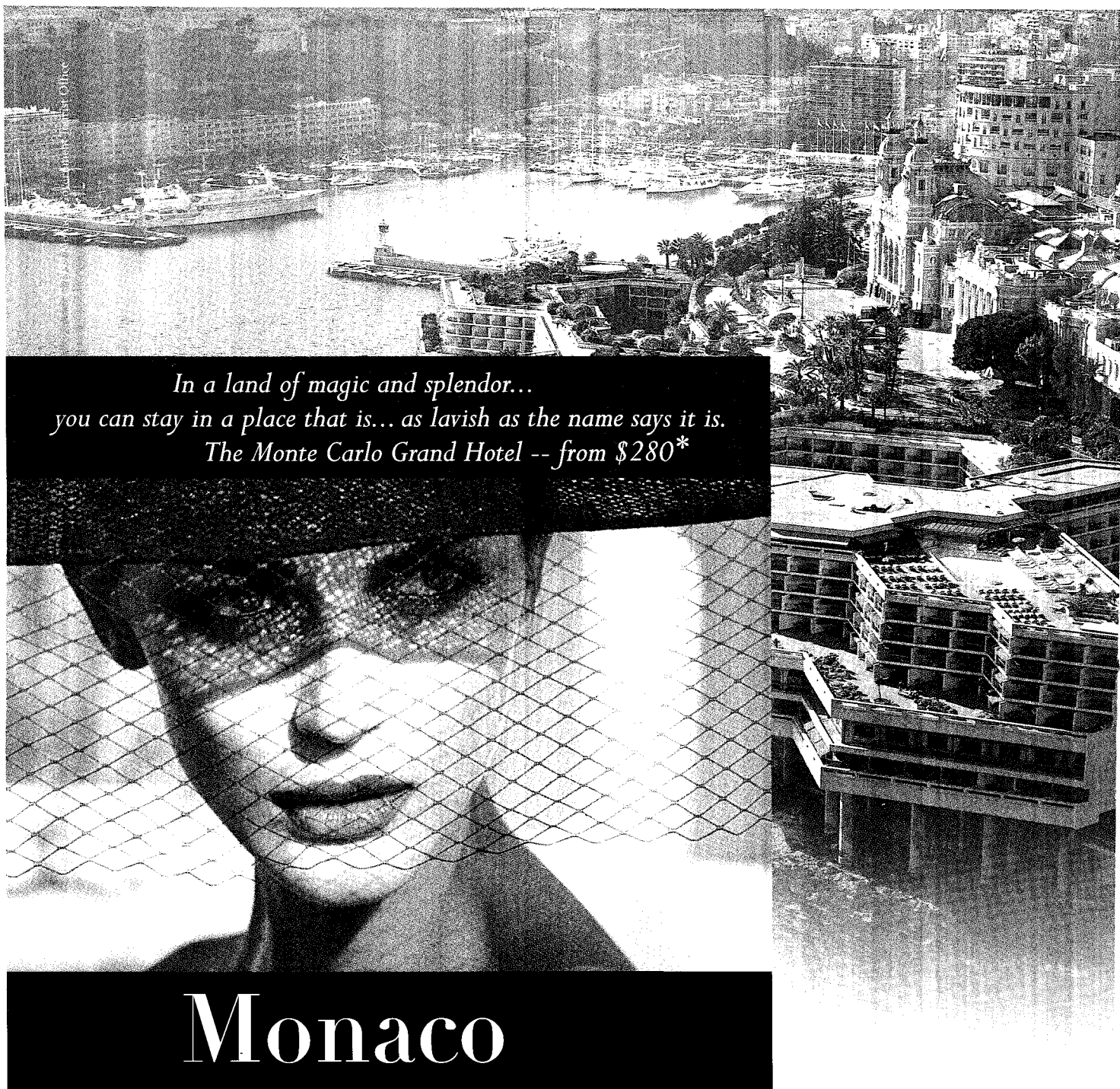
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PROFILE

THINKING THE UNTHINKABLE

A young historian proposes that the Great War was England's fault.

BY ROBERT S. BOYNTON

IN 1918, on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the "war to end all wars" came to an end. Every November since 1919, the people of Great Britain have observed two minutes of silence to mark the moment when the guns on the Western Front fell quiet. For the eightieth anniversary of the Armistice, last year, the Royal Family, political leaders, and the Bishop of London gathered on Remembrance Day at the Cenotaph in Whitehall to honor the British soldiers who perished in the conflict.

That week, some of Britain's most distinguished historians and elder statesmen assembled at the Royal Geographic Society, in London, to hear a lecture by the young historian Niall Ferguson, whose book about the conflict, *"The Pity of War,"* had just been published to considerable attention. Ferguson, in an impeccably tailored suit, looked more like a rising young banker in the City than like an Oxford don who had established his academic credentials, a few years earlier, with a densely analytical study of hyperinflation in Weimar Germany. Speaking in the clipped cadences and rolling "r"s of his native Glasgow, he began by describing the suffering that British soldiers endured in the battles of Verdun, Passchendaele, and the Somme, in which twenty thousand men died in a single day. In commemoration of a conflict that inspired a great body of eloquent antiwar literature, he read a poem written in 1916 by a Scottish platoon commander to a dead soldier's family: "So you were David's father, / And he was your only son, / And the new-cut peats are rotting / And the work is left undone."

Then Ferguson abruptly changed course. The war, he said, was more than a tragedy; it was "the greatest error of modern history"—an error for which Britain was heavily to blame. Rather than joining the Allied war effort, he said, Britain should have maintained its

neutrality and allowed the Germans to win a limited Continental war against the French and the Russians. In that event, he postulated, Germany, whose war aims in 1914 were relatively modest, would have respected the territorial integrity of Belgium, France, and Hol-

and ain the role of villain in a story in which it had always viewed itself as the savior of Europe was heretical. That Britain was somehow accountable for the century's subsequent catastrophes was unthinkable.

"THE PITY OF WAR," published in the United States last month, couldn't be more timely in a world that is witnessing the birth of a German-dominated European Union and, simultaneously, a massive military attempt by great powers to keep hostilities in the Balkans from spreading beyond local boundaries. Ferguson, in more than five hundred pages, offers a prodigiously researched argument that subverts the conventional wisdom about the origins



Ferguson with his children at home in Oxfordshire. Photograph by Dudley Reed.

land and settled for a German-led European federation. Had Britain "stood aside," he continued, it is likely that the century would have been spared the Bolshevik Revolution, the Second World War, and perhaps even the Holocaust. He concluded, "With the Kaiser triumphant, Adolf Hitler could have eked out his life as a mediocre postcard painter, and Lenin could have carried on his splenetic scribbling in Zurich, forever waiting for capitalism to collapse."

The import of the speech was stunning. That Ferguson was assigning Brit-

of the First World War. According to standard accounts, the conflict became inevitable when nationalist rivalries in Europe were exacerbated by Germany's reckless militarism. Britain entered the war for the noble purpose of protecting Belgian neutrality. And the war ended, after four years of horrific battles waged by honorable but reluctant soldiers, only after the intervention of American forces in 1918.

Ferguson turns this story on its head. He argues that Britain's ambiguous and vacillating policy toward Europe had

encouraged German aggression, and that it was Britain's decision to intervene that transformed the war into a worldwide conflict. In other words, the war was not inevitable. While Britain floundered, trying to present a unified front, the Germans seized the advantage, because, Ferguson declares, they "did not care about losing 'face'; they cared about losing the arms race." When Britain finally intervened, after Germany invaded neutral Belgium, it was motivated, Ferguson says, more by domestic considerations, by the need to maintain a fragile government coalition, than by high-minded principles. Germany ultimately lost the war, Ferguson writes, not because of the Allies' military superiority—on the contrary, he says, Germany had a far more efficient army—but because of a "crisis in German morale," brought on, perhaps, by the soldiers' knowledge that the German High Command was exploring the possibility of armistice. "The key to the allies' victory was not an improvement in their ability to kill the enemy," Ferguson argues, "but rather a sudden increase in the willingness of German soldiers to surrender."

"The Pity of War" is an attempt to demystify the war by examining it in purely rational terms. Eschewing the dramatic narrative form, Ferguson presents a series of crisply written analytical essays that address key questions: Why did Germany's leaders decide to gam-

ble on war in the first place? If the goal of war is to kill, then how effectively was it done? If soldiers were miserable, why did so few surrender or desert? If British intervention was inevitable, why did the Cabinet of Prime Minister Edward Grey nearly opt for neutrality? And who won the peace—or, in Ferguson's economically driven terms, who "ended up paying for the war?" His answer to this last question is that, contrary to the popular belief, promulgated by Keynes, the economic consequences of the Versailles Treaty were not that severe for the Germans, particularly since they managed to avoid paying all but a fraction of the war reparations.

In what is perhaps the book's most disturbing chapter, Ferguson asserts that the soldiers on both sides continued to fight for as long as they did because many of them actually enjoyed killing—whether for reasons of revenge or of sheer sport. He contends that the true tragedy of the war was its transformation of initially decent soldiers into morally hollow, indiscriminate killers. Julian Grenfell, the "archetypal upper-class cavalry chap" and a poet, wrote in his war diary how "exciting" it was when, one day, he crept into no man's land and caught an incautious German soldier "laughing and talking." He went on, "I saw his teeth glisten against my foresight, and I pulled the trigger very steady. He just gave a grunt and crumpled up."

Probably no war, before or since, has

inspired such an enormous literary response, from the poetry of Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, and Siegfried Sassoon and the novels of Ford Madox Ford, Hemingway, Remarque, and Faulkner to popular historical accounts by everyone from Churchill and Lloyd George to Barbara Tuchman and A. J. P. Taylor. The war's commentators have viewed it as a watershed that brought the nineteenth century to a close and gave birth to the technologically sophisticated barbarism of the modern era. Among Ferguson's targets is the sentiment, expressed by many of these authors, that the conflict was akin to a "natural catastrophe," an event that was beyond anyone's control. This view, he charges, only echoes the irresponsible position taken by Grey's Cabinet, which held that the war was "the result of such vast historical forces that no human agency could have prevented it."

An economic historian by training, Ferguson buttresses his arguments with statistical charts that compare such data as the combatants' war expenditures, rates of recruitment, inflation rates, and national debts. Many of his findings lend chilling precision to Bertrand Russell's definition of war as "maximum slaughter at minimum expense." For example, according to Ferguson's calculations, the Germans were the more efficient killers. He writes, "Whereas it cost the Entente Powers \$36,485.48 to kill a serviceman fighting for the Central Powers, it cost the Central Powers just \$11,344.77 to kill a serviceman fighting for the Entente."

Even more than his quantitative methods, Ferguson's philosophical approach to the practice of history has created controversy. For him, writing history is not merely a way to recover the past but an invitation to speculate about what might—or should—have happened but didn't. In 1997, he edited a collection of essays entitled "Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals," in which various historians pondered what today's world might look like if events had taken a different turn at crucial historical moments. ("What if Germany had invaded Britain in May 1940?" "What if there had been no American Revolution?") With "The Pity of War" Ferguson confirms his place as the dean of Britain's "What if?" historians.



"There're no business deductions like show-business deductions."

Ferguson justifies this approach as a "necessary antidote" to the covert determinism he finds in the works of most other historians. To him, the worst of these culprits are the Marxists, who in his view treat history as the story of preordained "winners" and "losers." (In turn, E. H. Carr, the Marxist scholar and the author of "What Is History?," dismisses Ferguson's brand of history as a "parlor game.") Ferguson's wrath is not limited to Marxists; it extends to any method that approaches history as a "story" with a beginning, a middle, and an end—a fixed narrative that relegates contingency and alternative outcomes to the realm of science fiction and fantasy. In "Virtual History," Ferguson explains that by examining the options that were available at critical junctures the historian is able to "recapture the uncertainty of decision-makers in the past, to whom the future was merely a set of possibilities." By weighing alternative outcomes, the historian can gain a deeper understanding of why events turned out the way they did. "To understand how it actually was," Ferguson writes, "we therefore need to understand *how it actually wasn't*—but how, to contemporaries, it might have been."

Such a cerebral, anti-narrative approach might be expected to distance the reader from the grim human realities of the conflict, but "The Pity of War" had the opposite effect on me. While following the twists and turns of Ferguson's richly detailed, relentlessly contrarian arguments—and there are literally hundreds of them in the text—I found myself caught up in the suspense of the war, at times even wondering how it would end. As Ferguson led me down the myriad roads *not* taken, I was "virtually" transformed into a decision-maker in those years—so much so that the question "What if?" became more compelling than "What happened?"

Ferguson's methods have their flaws. He is so interested in spinning clever scenarios about how events should have gone that when it comes to the more mundane business of explaining how, for example, the Allies eventually managed to win he falls short. And his ultimate virtual scenario—that we'd all be better off if Germany had won a limited war—seems, at best, far-fetched. As one of the book's fiercest critics, Lord Noël Annan, succinctly put it to me, "If we

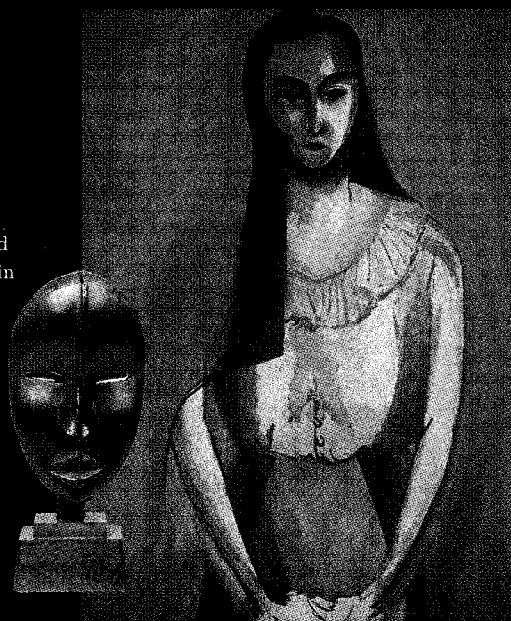
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Left: Don Peck (Chicago and New York). Face Mask (with Ingeborg Bass, n.d.). Ingeborg and Lucille Alderman. Right: Earl Horter. Italian Woman, 1913. Soliman & Guggenheim Museum, New York. In Exchange, 1902.

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had stood aside, the result would have been a Europe dominated by German militarism, not by some nice democratic power." It is unsurprising that Ferguson has been accused of being pro-German, but he would argue that his position is merely more objective than traditional accounts. In the book, he concedes that an American diplomat who observed during the war that "the Germans want somebody to rob—to pay their great military bills" was probably right. Still, he believes that, as he said to me, "a unified Germany would have been much less prone to Nazi ideology, because Wilhelmine Germany was one of the most philo-Semitic states in the world." Lurking between the lines of "The Pity of War" is a grand counterfactual vision that smacks of nostalgia for a lost Britain. Although Ferguson never says so explicitly, his book can be read as the dream of a young conservative who wants to put Britain back in the center of a world in which its empire still exists and its friendly, pre-1914 relationship with Germany endures.

IF Niall Ferguson were a wild-eyed radical, his argument would sting less, but "The Pity of War" is a critique from the heart of the British intellectual establishment. Although Ferguson is just thirty-four years old, he has been a don—first at Cambridge and now at Oxford—for a decade, and he has already written more books and papers than many in his field have in a lifetime. Since 1995, when Cambridge University Press released "Paper and Iron," a well-regarded study of German hyperinflation during the nineteen-twenties, Ferguson has published, in addition to "The Pity of War," a widely praised thirteen-hundred-page biography of the Rothschild family, "The World's Banker." Writing in *The New Republic*, the historian Fritz Stern said that the book "reaffirms one's faith in the possibility of great historical writing." (In the United States, the biography is being published in two parts, the second of which will appear in November.) Ferguson belongs to a small contingent of opinion-leading British intellectuals known in the press as Dial-a-Dons, and over the past few years he has turned out hundreds of reviews and commentaries for newspapers and journals. Lately, Ferguson has become a forceful critic of

New Labour. He is especially harsh on Tony Blair's proposal for Scottish autonomy within a rebranded "cool Britannia"; in his view, "Scotland has benefited hugely from the union, almost more than England has."

Last fall, Ferguson made a publishing deal, with Penguin, that is unprecedented for a historian. The terms call for him to receive an advance of six hundred thousand pounds (or nearly a million dollars) for three books: "The Pity of War," a history of the decline of European monarchy, and a study of the role of sexuality in ethnic conflict in Eastern Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. Ferguson made the deal himself, after firing his (second) literary agent, and Penguin seems thrilled with the coup. "Niall's wish to become quite famous is a fantastic boon to his publisher," Simon Winder, the firm's editorial director, remarked to me. Ferguson describes his windfall in broader terms. "It's good news that history is box office," he told the *Guardian*.

But in a country that maintains more than sixty thousand memorials to the First World War—there are more than twenty-two hundred in London alone—"The Pity of War" was received, in many quarters, as blasphemy. Veterans' groups have denied that soldiers killed their prisoners—yet another of the book's controversial arguments—or enjoyed killing, and have questioned Ferguson's sources and his motives.

Many of the negative reviews have focussed on Ferguson's desire to attack every accepted interpretation of the war. "There is something of the clever-silly about his over-determined contrarianism," the political historian R. W. Johnson wrote in *The London Review of Books*. In *The Times Literary Supplement*, Sir Michael Howard denounced Ferguson for overstepping his bounds. "Historians are judges, not advocates or juries," Howard wrote. "Our function can only be to discover what happened and try to explain why."

In general, however, "The Pity of War" has been well received. The Brit-

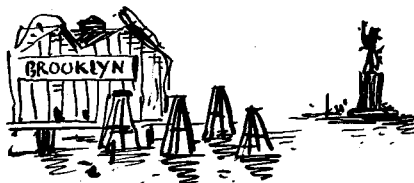
ish political journal *Prospect* recently called Ferguson the brightest of the generation of young, post-Cold War British "pop" historians—Orlando Figes and Mark Mazower are two others—who have "embarked on an intrepid endeavor: to fire the historical imagination of their contemporaries—both in Britain and abroad—to seize the *Zeit* by its *Geist*." And, in an unsigned piece, a reviewer for *The Economist* wrote, "At one massive stroke, Niall Ferguson has transformed this dismal intellectual landscape, a kind of Flanders of the mind, [by bringing] the carnage of 1914-1918 into sharp, unmystified focus."

IN "What Is History?" E. H. Carr offers this advice: "Before you study the history, study the historian." Recently, I took the Underground into London's financial district and walked over to the Bank of England, on Threadneedle Street, where Ferguson has a fellowship to study the history of British bond rates. After being checked in by a pair of guards wearing top hats and tails, I was met by a slender young man in a stylish green corduroy suit and a starched pink shirt, whose boyish good looks the British press has likened to Tom Cruise's.

"Welcome to the building from which Britain once ran the world," Ferguson said, greeting me with a broad smile and a bone-crunching handshake. He led me on a tour through the long marble halls and elegant courtyards of Sir John Soane's Neoclassical masterpiece, pointing out the bank's small war memorial on one side of the lobby. Confident and warm in manner, he seemed at once eager to demonstrate a degree of Scottish reserve and to subvert it with joking, offhand remarks.

When we arrived at Ferguson's office, he directed me to a chair beneath a blackboard that was covered with incomprehensible mathematical hieroglyphics. He handed me an article he had written entitled "Political Economy of the International Bond Market from the Age of Reason to the Present with Special Reference to the Period from 1850 to 1914." With a grin, he explained, "This is me wearing my academic hat. Look at these graphs, and you'll see that I'm really nothing but a train-spotter at heart."

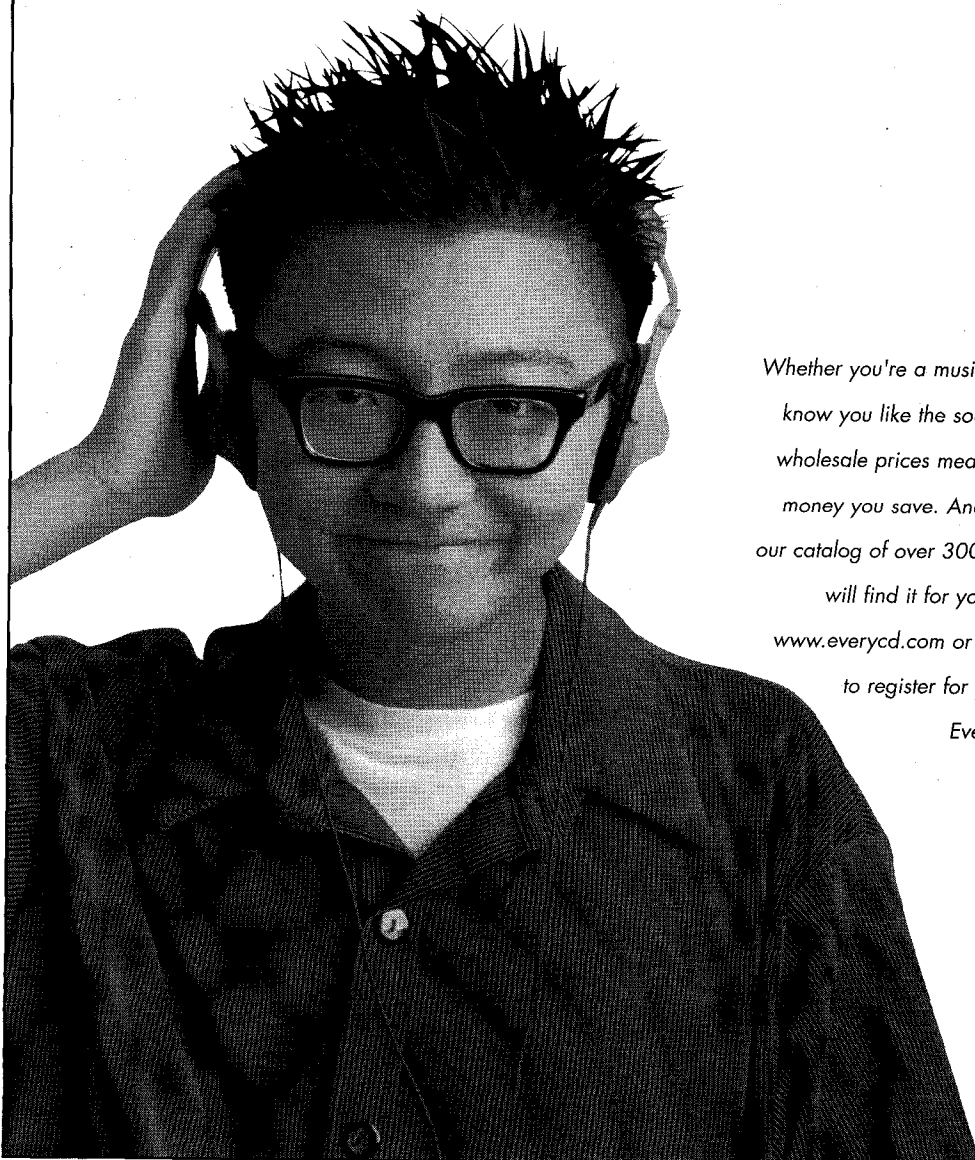
In fact, government bonds hold the key to Ferguson's view of history. As he





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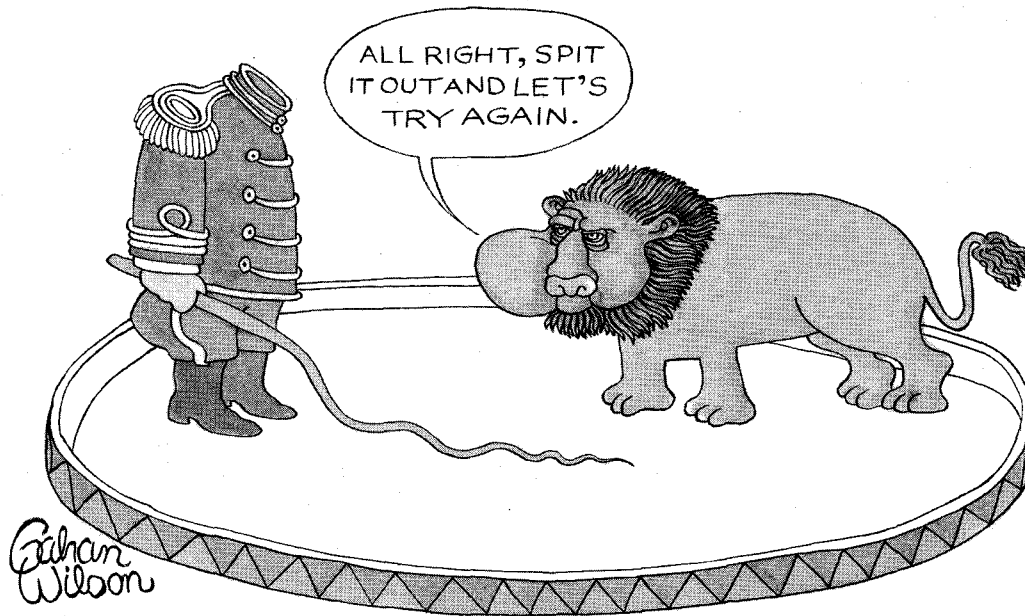
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wrote in his Rothschild biography, they are the crucial historical indices, the "daily opinion poll of confidence in a given regime." Bond rates offer the historian clues to how people have actually experienced their times. "What historians need to realize," Ferguson told me, "is that the thing people are really interested in is the short-term, day-to-day changes in politics and the economy. Even in the nineteenth century, people were only dimly aware that there was this big industrialization going on around them. What they really cared about was right in front of them: 'What will the price of French bonds be tomorrow? Should I buy or sell? Will the government survive this vote or will it fail?'"

When I asked Ferguson why he wrote "The Pity of War," he told me about his grandfather. In 1914, at the age of sixteen, John Gilmour Ferguson tried to join the Army, only to be dragged home by his mother. The day he turned seventeen, he signed up with the Scottish Seaforth Highlanders. The Germans called the Highland troops, who were used as advance shock troops, devils in skirts; the Scots' high mortality rate—twenty-six per cent as opposed to eleven per cent for other British soldiers—indicates that the nickname was well earned. Young John Ferguson survived with only a gunshot wound to one shoulder, but his lungs were permanently scarred by mustard gas. Niall Ferguson remembers that, as a child, he would sit on his grandfather's knee

while the old man huffed and wheezed.

Ferguson grew up in a family with a strong scientific bent: his father is a doctor, his mother a physicist, and his sister a biologist. He attended the Glasgow Academy, a no-nonsense grammar school, where the city's middle-class sons prepared for careers in law or medicine. The school was also a war memorial: each morning the students passed by a granite slab inscribed with the names of the three hundred and twenty-seven alumni who had died in the First World War. Inside, a memorial honor roll bore the words "Say not that the brave die." Ferguson remembers being upset by the phrase. "I'd pass by this shrine every day and wonder what it meant," he told me. "Was the war a foolish disaster or a noble achievement? In the morning, we'd read Wilfred Owen's poetry about the tragedy of war, and in the afternoon we'd go to the playground to march around in uniform, drilled by Army regulars. I thought this was absurd." He chose to write his first school paper, at the age of twelve, on "trench warfare." As a teen-ager, he became transfixed by A. J. P. Taylor's televised lectures on European history. Taylor's study of the First World War was the first adult history book he read.

Ferguson won a scholarship to study history at Magdalen College, Oxford. "He was very much a Scot on the make," his Penguin editor, Simon Winder, recalls. "Niall was a witty, belligerent bloke who seemed to have come from an en-

tirely different planet." At Magdalen, Ferguson became acutely aware of class hypocrisies. "I was surrounded by insufferable Etonians with fake Cockney accents who imagined themselves to be working-class heroes in solidarity with the striking miners," he told me. "It wasn't long before it became clear that the really funny and interesting people on campus were Thatcherites." He joined the Oxford Union, where William Hague (now the Conservative Party leader) had presided, and where Andrew Sullivan was now in charge. Ferguson and Sullivan,

who went on to be the editor of *The New Republic*, became best friends. "Niall and I were Thatcherites when it was distinctly unfashionable," Sullivan recalls. "We loved her iconoclasm and the passionate attachment to institutions which she combined with a deep desire to rattle them."

Ferguson calls this his "punk Tory" period—a phase when he and Sullivan listened to the Sex Pistols and vied to see who could most effectively rankle the left-liberal majority. He treasures an invitation he received from friends at Balliol in the early eighties, to a cocktail party to celebrate the deployment of U.S. cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe. The invitations were illustrated with champagne bottles emitting mushroom clouds. The conservative Cambridge historian John Adamson remembers dining with Ferguson the night Thatcher resigned. "We both sensed it was the end of an era," Adamson said. "After dinner, we consumed a monumental amount of whiskey in his rooms while blasting the last scene of 'Götterdämmerung,' where Brünnhilde throws herself on the funeral pyre and the whole world comes to an end."

After taking a First in history, Ferguson was accepted into the postgraduate program. He chose as his mentor the historian Norman Stone, who was a fellow-Scot, a Glasgow Academy alumnus, a much reviled Thatcherite, and—like one of Stone's heroes, A. J. P. Taylor—a media don. "Old A.J.P. was the

grandfather of us all," Stone told me. "When academic history was getting more elitist and narrow, he popularized it in a way no one else could." Indeed, in the long line of British historians, it is Taylor, with his iconoclastic sensibility, fondness for the spotlight, and journalistic facility, whom Ferguson most resembles.

Ferguson improved his German by meeting with Stone at an Oxford pub at eleven in the morning to read Nietzsche over pints of Guinness. He wanted to write his thesis on the Viennese satirist Karl Kraus, but Stone urged him to choose a more quantitative, analytical topic. As an undergraduate, Ferguson had studied medieval financial history with the eminent economist Gerald Harris; while his peers were reading Aristotle, Hobbes, and Rousseau, Ferguson was poring over Marx, Keynes, and Adam Smith. "Harris made me realize that understanding finance and tax systems really mattered for a historian," Ferguson said. "He taught me that history had to be *difficult* to be good."

After Oxford, Ferguson spent a year and a half in Hamburg, in the Warburg archives, studying the hyperinflation that crippled Germany in the early nineteen-twenties. The book that emerged from his dissertation, "Paper and Iron," was his first foray into counterfactual thinking. In it, he postulated what Weimar Germany would have looked like if it had been run according to Thatcherite economics. He argued that the hyperinflation that destroyed Weimar's rich bourgeois culture could have been avoided by a combination of deflationary economic policies and authoritarian political measures.

Along with a small German fellowship, Ferguson supported his Hamburg research by writing for London's *Daily Mail* and *Daily Telegraph*. One afternoon, the *Telegraph's* foreign editor informed him that its Bonn office had closed and that Ferguson was now the paper's sole German correspondent. "Every day," he says, "I'd run out of the archive at four-thirty, when it closed, and make frantic phone calls to find out what had happened. And then I'd write it up while I was standing in the phone booth and call it in."

Ferguson says that it was his experience as a journalist that taught him to write quickly and concisely, and he

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prides himself on his ability to write on any subject. He's as comfortable with issuing polemics against the European monetary union as he is with dashing off life-style columns on Internet fatigue or on his children's favorite toys. Journalism also provides him with the opportunity to remind the British establishment that, while he is solidly in it, he will never be entirely of it. Readers who learned of the birth of his first child in his column in the conservative *Telegraph* were no doubt surprised when he announced, several months later, his marriage to the child's mother. In the years before he had tenure, Ferguson juggled several pseudonyms to protect his academic reputation. When one *Daily Mail* editor insisted that an author's photograph be run alongside Ferguson's column, he put on a pair of thick glasses to disguise himself.

"The English are absolutely dazzled by productivity, particularly at Oxbridge, where there is almost a perverse esteem for those who eschew the vulgarity of print," John Adamson told me. The fact that Ferguson wrote "The Pity of War" in just five months and completed the massive Rothschild biography in five years—while maintaining a full teaching load—has caused a good deal of consternation among even his most prolific peers. A number of dons I talked to dismissed his weighty tomes as "coffee-table books" or "mere journalism." But much of the enmity is directed at Ferguson's habit of employing well-paid research assistants—a practice that is commonplace among American professors but still relatively rare among their British counterparts.

In 1990, Ferguson's research skills were tested when he was asked by the publisher George Weidenfeld to write the authorized biography of the Rothschild family. Although he was the first scholar to be given unrestricted access to the personal and professional records of Europe's most powerful banking dynasty, there was a catch: much of the material was in Judendeutsch, an archaic form of German written in Hebrew script, which the Rothschilds used to encode their missives. Instead of adding years to the project by deciphering the Hebrew lettering, Ferguson enlisted a Rothschild employee to read the docu-

ments into a tape recorder. He then listened to the tapes, so that he could swiftly identify exactly which sections he needed for his book.

When Ferguson returned from Germany, in 1989, to teach at Cambridge, he was the object of undergraduate fascination. His frequent absences from campus and his stylish wardrobe led to a rumor that he was an agent with MI5. "Niall kept the different parts of his life separated as carefully as Maoist terrorists guard their cells," one former colleague says. Ferguson was a charismatic teacher. One student recalls seeing a cadre of women and gay men swoon in the first few rows of a lecture hall as Ferguson launched a course on Weimar Germany with a multimedia assortment of Kurt Weill songs and Georg Grosz paintings.

Ferguson elected to teach at the famously reactionary college of Peterhouse, where he was taken up by the arch-conservative historian Maurice Cowling. "The whole of my life has been dedicated to sneering at liberal high-mindedness, and Niall has none of it," Cowling told me. "He is a demotic conservative who takes the world as he finds it. He hasn't got a burning desire to make the world better than it is, nor—unlike Marxist historians—does he condemn it."

FERGUSON returned to Oxford in 1992 and took up a lectureship at Jesus College. On a cold, foggy morning, I took a train from Paddington Station to Oxford. A cabdriver dropped me at the college, where, on the third floor of an Elizabethan building, Ferguson has a spacious suite. A faded Oriental rug covers floorboards worn down by four centuries of pacing dons. Ferguson is currently on a year's sabbatical, and he divides his days between Oxford, the Bank of England, and Windsor Castle, where he is doing research for his book about the European monarchy, entitled "Twilight of the Crowns." When he's working in London, he sleeps in a flat he has in Soho; when he's working in Oxford, he heads home to a seventeenth-century farmhouse, ten miles out of town, which he shares with his wife, the journalist Susan Douglas, and their two children. After lunch at a French bistro, we climbed into Ferguson's rattling



Land Rover, drove into the countryside, and, finally, turned onto a muddy road leading to the farmhouse, a large stone building that appeared so ancient it might have grown out of the verdant earth surrounding it.

In the company of two black Labrador retrievers, two cats, a flock of ducks, and stables full of horses, I felt as though I'd been whisked into a James Herriot novel. After stoking the fire in the dining room, Ferguson introduced me to his wife, who was seven months pregnant; in a black cocktail dress, black stockings, and black suede pumps, she looked dressed for an evening in a Soho club. Douglas, who was once described by the *Telegraph* as "the living embodiment of Eighties Executive Media Woman," is clearly a formidable asset to Ferguson's donnish ambitions.

Ferguson and Douglas met in 1987, when she was his editor at the *Daily Mail*; he spent the next five years working up the courage to ask her for a date. Douglas has held top editorial positions at the *Sunday Times* and the *Sunday Express*, and currently works as a consultant; until several months ago, she was flying to New York once a week to help Bob Guccione, Jr., launch his new magazine, *Gear*. There has been gossip that the extraordinary attention paid to "The Pity of War" was due to her media connections, although Ferguson has had nearly as much journalistic experience as she has. "You mean Dr. and Mrs. Glamour?" one Fleet Street veteran said when I mentioned the couple.

Over dinner, I asked Douglas and Ferguson how they were able to get so much twentieth-century work done in their seventeenth-century setting. After outlining complex arrangements with nannies, caretakers, and research assistants, Ferguson told me how his research on the Rothschilds had influenced his vision of the intellectual's vocation. "I was extremely impressed by their single-minded work ethic," he said, lifting his wineglass for emphasis. "Nathan Rothschild has this wonderful line: 'I don't play cards, I don't go to the theatre: all I do is business.' Studying the Rothschilds made me realize, Why be a passive, unworldly academic author who expects to be able to sit all day in an ivory tower writing great works that no one will read? After all, history is a business, too." ♦

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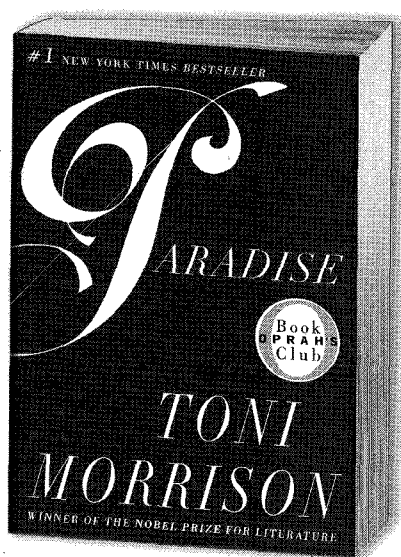
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THE SPORTING SCENE

SWINGING

Golf, it turns out, is a very risky business.

BY DAVID OWEN

PEOPLE who sell things for a living have a rotten reputation, but I like them. They look you in the eye, use your name a lot, hold your shoulder while they talk to you, and laugh really hard at your jokes. They take you out to expensive restaurants, and when the waiter asks them if they want a drink they don't say, "Just water, please." They ask you where you went to college and what your kids do after school. They suggest through facial expressions and body language that they would like to marry you. In other words, salespeople treat you exactly the way you wish everyone would treat you—the way you deserve to be treated. Their only tiny flaw is that they don't mean any of it: they're just trying to make a sale. But isn't that a trivial defect, all things considered? Doesn't the insincerity of salespeople seem like a negligible shortcoming in comparison with the incalculably opulent richness of their devotion?

Well, I think it does. And I had plenty of opportunities to agree with myself recently, because I spent four days in Orlando, Florida, attending the 1999 Merchandise Show of the Professional Golfers' Association of America. It is one of the largest trade shows in the United States, and this year it comprised more than fourteen hundred exhibits, staffed by thousands of attractive, friendly, enthusiastic people selling just about every imaginable type of golf-related product and service. I talked with a guy who had invented a short-shafted golf club, which he told me is supposed to be used for hitting golf balls while the user is sitting on a toilet; learned from a man who was selling a forty-thousand-dollar golf simulator how far I would be able to hit my seven iron on the moon (more than a mile); studied copper wristbands at the booth of Sabona of London, a company whose headquarters are in Sikeston, Missouri; filled two large plastic shopping bags with brochures for com-

panies that sell everything from satellite-based yardage-measurement systems to signs urging golfers not to urinate on trees; and chatted about Ireland with a woman whose son packages golf trips.

My purpose in doing all this was not only to avoid some nasty weather back home, in the Northeast. I also wanted to reflect upon golf as an industry, a game, and a cultural phenomenon. I don't mind telling you that I came to some pretty interesting conclusions.

DURING the past few years, golf has occupied more space than usual in the consciousness of Americans, mostly because of the brilliant young player Tiger Woods. Woods has made golf seem sort of cool—or, at least, not totally disgusting—and the game's new cachet has caught the attention of almost everyone who sells almost anything that golfers might conceivably buy. People who play golf tend to have money, and people who sell things are attracted to that. I had attended the P.G.A. Merchandise Show once before, in 1992, and at that time the exhibition seemed gigantic, but this year's show was more than twice that size. All sorts of manufacturers have realized that a person who will freely spend five hundred dollars for a putter and two hundred dollars for a short-sleeved shirt is a person they would like to know better.

It's all incredibly vibrant and exciting, except for one small detail: if you look deeper than about a millimetre below the surface, the current golf boom doesn't seem like much of a boom. The National Golf Foundation, in a report released at this year's show, estimated that there are now about twenty-six million golfers in America. That's a huge number, but it's only slightly huger than the number the N.G.F. turned up in a similar study in 1988. Even worse, the N.G.F. predicted that during the next decade the number of golfers in America will probably grow at an annual rate

of just one and a half or two per cent.

Golf-related headlines in the financial pages have also been bleak. Golden Bear Golf, whose chairman is Jack Nicklaus, revealed that instead of losing fifty-three cents a share in 1997 (as had been previously announced) it had actually lost four dollars and forty-nine cents a share, and the company's stock tanked; several well-known golf companies—among them Ben Hogan, Black Rock, Founders Club, Lynx, MacGregor, Ram, Nevada Bob's, Snake Eyes, Tad Moore, and Tommy Armour—have either folded or filed for bankruptcy protection or been bailed out or absorbed by other companies; Coastcast, which makes club heads for Callaway, Cobra, Taylor Made, Titleist, and other well-known companies, revealed last month that it had been forced to lay off half its employees and to shift the bulk of its manufacturing to Tijuana.

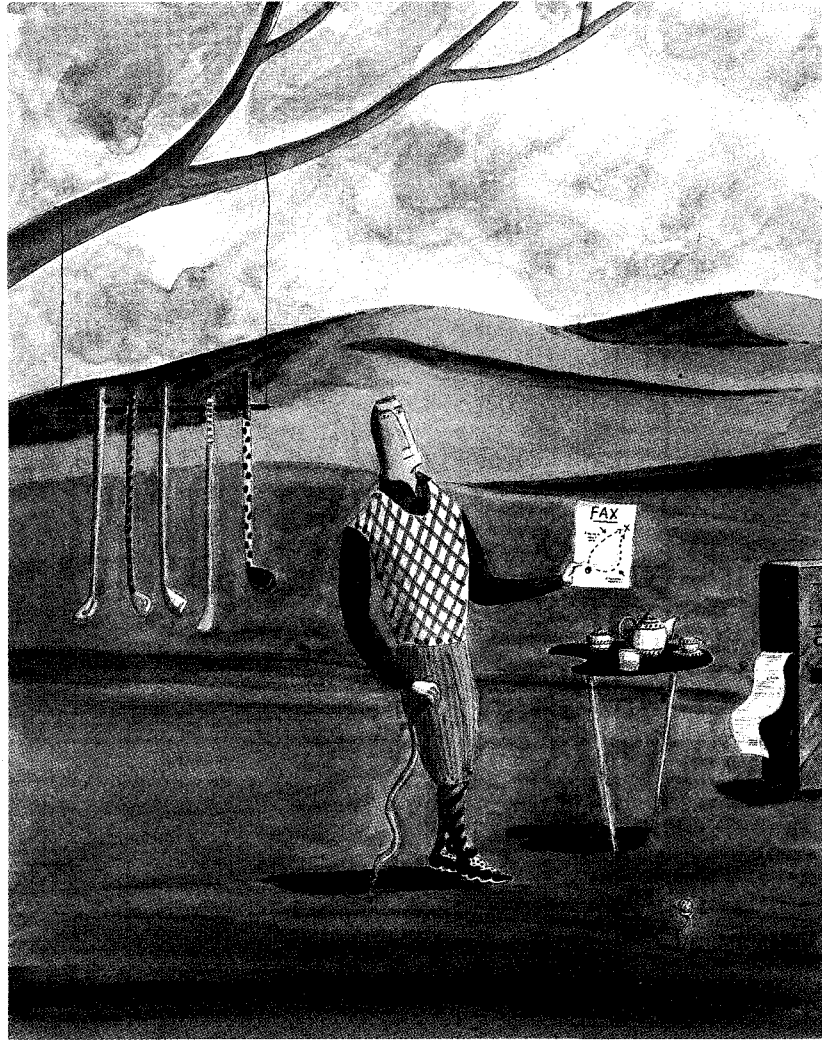
The state of the industry was most poignantly exemplified at the merchandise show by Goldwin Golf, a company that entered the business in the mid-nineties with a driver whose distinguishing feature was a head milled from solid aluminum. Goldwin grew rapidly, and the company's executives began to dream big dreams. This year, Goldwin bought much of the most conspicuous and expensive advertising space at the convention center in Orlando, including the back cover of the show's four-hundred-page-plus directory and buyers' guide. The directory ad announced the introduction of a sleek new Goldwin driver, called the AVDP III. (The initials stand for "avoidupois.") "Revolution not evolution," the ad said. "The future of golf is in your hands."

When I went to take a look at the AVDP III, though, I found a restaurant occupying the thirty-two-hundred-square-foot space where Goldwin's booth was supposed to be. I later learned that a few days before the opening of the show Goldwin's main financial backers, alarmed by deteriorating

by a septuagenarian California businessman named Ely Callaway, who had made an emergency investment, ten years before, in a small, money-losing manufacturer of specialty golf clubs and had renamed the company after himself. Callaway had already completed two successful careers. He had been the

president of Burlington Industries and, after leaving that position, in 1973, had run and sold his own thriving vineyard and winery in Southern California.

In 1986, Ely—whose name is pronounced "Ee-lee"—hired Richard C. Helmstetter, who for the previous seventeen years had been manufacturing pool cues in Japan. Helmstetter combined some ideas of his own with some ideas that had been lying around Callaway Golf and came up with Big Bertha. Ely took an anxious warning from one of his engineers—"You can't argue with physics"—and turned it into an advertising slogan, devising an immensely successful marketing campaign based on a claim that Big Berthas hit balls farther and straighter than other clubs, and



A crucial element of a merchandiser's success is the lunacy of avid golfers.

sales, had suddenly decided not only to withdraw the exhibit but also to essentially shut down the company. Goldwin's representatives in Orlando had been told to take down the booth, check out of their hotels, and look for other jobs.

At the 1992 merchandise show, the big story was drivers with oversized heads. Such clubs are ubiquitous today, but they were just becoming popular at that time. The most popular one, which was called Big Bertha, had been introduced at the previous year's show by a then semi-obscure company called Callaway Golf. The company was run

were more forgiving of faulty swings. Sales surged, and, a month after the 1992 show, Ely took the company public. In 1993, shares of Callaway Golf (ticker symbol: ELY) more than tripled, outperforming all the other stocks on the New York Stock Exchange. Even more impressive, the company was able to sustain its growth by bringing out a steady succession of popular new products. It introduced a Big Bertha variant called War Bird, popularized a lofted fairway wood that it called the Heaven Wood, introduced Big Bertha irons in various versions, and developed two even bigger drivers—Great Big

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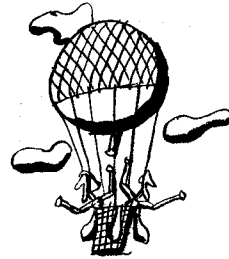
Bertha and Biggest Big Bertha—both of which had heads made not of steel but of titanium.

A crucial element of Callaway's success was the lunacy of avid golfers—a group in which I count myself. Golf promotes compulsion, because even poor players occasionally make good shots, and when they do they fool themselves into believing that they would make good shots all the time if they only tried a little harder or spent more money on equipment. I now have three retired golf bags, which I use for nothing except storing older types of Callaway clubs that I have replaced with newer types of Callaway clubs. Building my collection has not been cheap: some of my Big Berthas are among the most expensive golf clubs ever marketed, with retail prices as high as five hundred dollars apiece. But if all I need to do to become exactly like Tiger Woods is to go broke then that is what I'm going to do. And I am not alone. Because of customers like me, Callaway Golf became the world's largest and most profitable publicly owned manufacturer of golf clubs, and Ely developed a reputation as a genius. The company, with no foreseeable limit to its growth, boldly expanded beyond its core business—by setting up a series of "research-and-development facilities" at driving ranges, for example, and also by venturing onto the Internet.

Then, more or less all at once, everything went wrong. A small company called Adams Golf stole market share from Big Bertha by developing a hugely popular line of clubs called Tight Lies, which had unusually small heads. (Slogan: "Oversized is over.") Then another small company, called Orlimar, stole market share from both Adams and Callaway with another line of small-headed clubs, called Tri-Metal. Then the United States Golf Association, which performs roughly the same function in American golf that the Food and Drug Administration performs in American medicine, declared that several recent clubs, including some of Callaway's, might violate U.S.G.A. rules governing the resilience of club faces. (Under massive industry pressure, the U.S.G.A. subsequently backed down.)

Most important, nutty golfers like

me noticed that we were still shooting crummy scores despite having depleted our retirement accounts. This was very bad news. An often overlooked fact about the golf market is that although there may be twenty-six million golfers in America, there are only five or six million obsessives—players who dream about golf, practice their swings whenever they pass a mirror, and yearn to buy, for example, magnetic insoles for their golf shoes. The financial health of



the entire golf industry had come to depend on our sustained irrationality as consumers—on our continuing to buy and then immediately get tired of ever more expensive stuff—and some of us were feeling stretched. I have often played golf in four-somes in which all four of us used Big Bertha drivers and fairway woods; that degree of market penetration doesn't leave much room for growth.

All these developments brought Callaway Golf back to earth. Last fall, the company laid off a quarter of its full-time workforce (plus three hundred part-time workers), announced plans to shut down its non-core businesses, promised to cut fifty million dollars in expenses over two years, and informed Wall Street analysts that it might destroy thirty million dollars' worth of unsold clubs, so as not to dilute the market for new products. Today, the company's stock trades for about a third of what it traded for at its peak.

NOT very long ago, Callaway and several other top golf companies had a sudden and virtually simultaneous vision of salvation: golf balls. The appeal of balls to a beleaguered golf company is easy to understand. Balls, unlike clubs, have to be replaced on a regular basis no matter what: they wear out after a few rounds, sink to the bottoms of ponds, and disappear forever among weeds and trees. The market for balls—about six hundred and fifty million dollars' worth at wholesale every year—is large. Best of all, they cost very little to make (no more than thirty or forty cents apiece, even for the premium brands) yet can be sold for quite a lot (as much as six or seven dollars apiece in some larcenous golf shops). It sounds so good that there just has to be a catch—

and there are several. The main one is that the market for balls is growing very slowly, if at all. Golfers as a group buy roughly the same number of balls every year, and when they change brands they don't abandon usable balls they already own. As a result, the only way for one company to increase its business is to steal business from someone else—a zero-sum game.

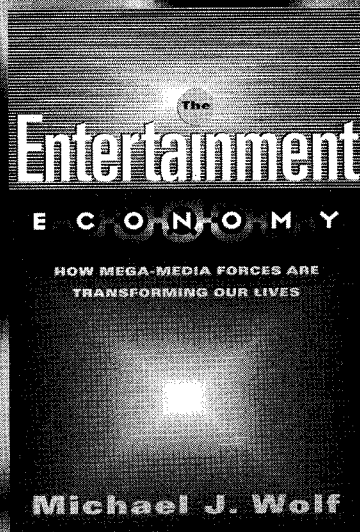
A modern golf ball is a miracle of engineering—it is an exquisitely aerodynamic object, whose dimples transform it into a sort of spherical wing—but the range of performance among different types of balls is small. (For example, the U.S.G.A. places an upper limit on distance, and almost all balls meet it or come close; that's why so many different brands claim to be the longest ball in the world.) If you remove the identifying markings from an assortment of balls, even very good players are unable to tell one from another by hitting them—perhaps partly as a result of the fact that seventy per cent of golf balls in the United States are manufactured, under a number of different names, by just two companies: Titleist, which is a division of Fortune Brands, and Spalding, whose best-known ball brand is Top-Flite. Marketing balls, like marketing cigarettes, is therefore mainly a matter of managing consumer perceptions. In a market like that, a newcomer has to be willing to spend a huge amount of money just to be noticed.

The splashiest entry into the ball market at the merchandise show this year was Taylor Made's. Its new balls, of which there are three varieties, are called InerGel—Taylor Made's term for the balls' distinguishing ingredient, "an exclusive copolymer that is both soft and super-resilient," in the words of a press release. Gary McCord, a well-known television commentator and famously mediocre professional golfer, was quoted in the same press release as having said, "This is a magic material. I can spin the ball more without swinging any harder, and I get more distance. Bingo. Game over."

A marketing representative for one of Taylor Made's competitors told me that the material Taylor Made calls InerGel is simply a well-known form of nylon that has been around for a long time but has never been used in golf balls before, because it readily absorbs mois-

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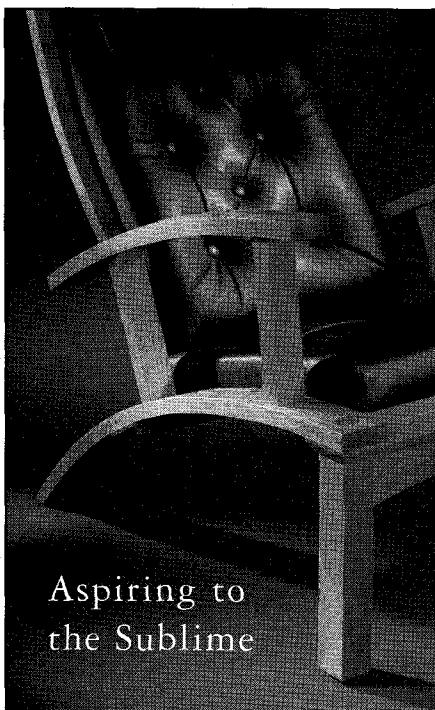


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ENCOUNTER

The lake that was caked ice is ice no more,
but waves scudding and making foam, although

if you plunged your arm up to the elbow
you'd touch the hard table-truth of ice, under which

brown trout tell their own story. A man with a gun
patrols the shore: be not a woodcock or a snipe

this rainy afternoon, or—if you are—sit still as stone
when his spaniel noses the drenched heather. Still,

he says, he wouldn't shoot a pheasant, for aren't there
only a few about, the lovely creatures. We stand

for a cigarette, his gun cracked open, and in his hand
two shells of shot—wine-colored, with golden bands

closing top and bottom—lie like matching rings.

—EAMON GRENNAN

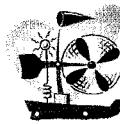
ture. A Taylor Made representative told me that InerGel balls are no more likely to absorb moisture than other golf balls are. Nevertheless, rumors of a water problem were all over the merchandise show ("Don't get 'em wet!"), and InerGel balls are packaged in unusual plastic sleeves "to provide protection from atmospheric moisture and ensure factory-fresh performance."

In developing the InerGel line of golf balls, Taylor Made started with technology and then built a marketing program around it; Nike, which also introduced balls at the show, approached the problem from the other direction. Brian Zappitello, Nike's marketing manager for golf products, told me how: "We took every bit of advertising that was out there, as well as all the products, and pasted everything up on a wall in a conference room. At the same time, we started sending other people's product out to independent testing laboratories, to see exactly whose claims were valid and whose weren't. We found that there was a lot of really good product in the market—but we also saw, on the wall in that conference room, a lot of confusion. There were stories about spin, and feel, and distance. They were all very viable stories, but we felt that the messages were being communi-

cated in a way that made it difficult for the consumer to understand what was going on."

After three months of studying ads for existing balls, Nike's marketing people identified what they felt was an underexploited golf-ball marketing niche: "accuracy." Zappitello continued, "Once we had identified that as the marketing story we wanted to go after, we knew we didn't have the competencies to go ahead and manufacture balls ourselves, so we found a development-and-manufacturing partner." Subcontracting development and production is not unusual in the ball business; ball factories are expensive, and only a small number of companies have their own. Zappitello wouldn't say so, but people in the industry told me that Nike's balls are made for it by Bridgestone, a Japanese company, whose own best-known golf-ball brand is Precept.

Are the golf balls that Bridgestone makes for Nike more accurate than the golf balls that Bridgestone makes for itself? I didn't ask Zappitello that question, because I was worried that it would sound rude, but, judging solely on the basis of Nike's new television commercials, I'd have to answer—yes! In one of those commercials, a golfer hits a Nike ball right down the center



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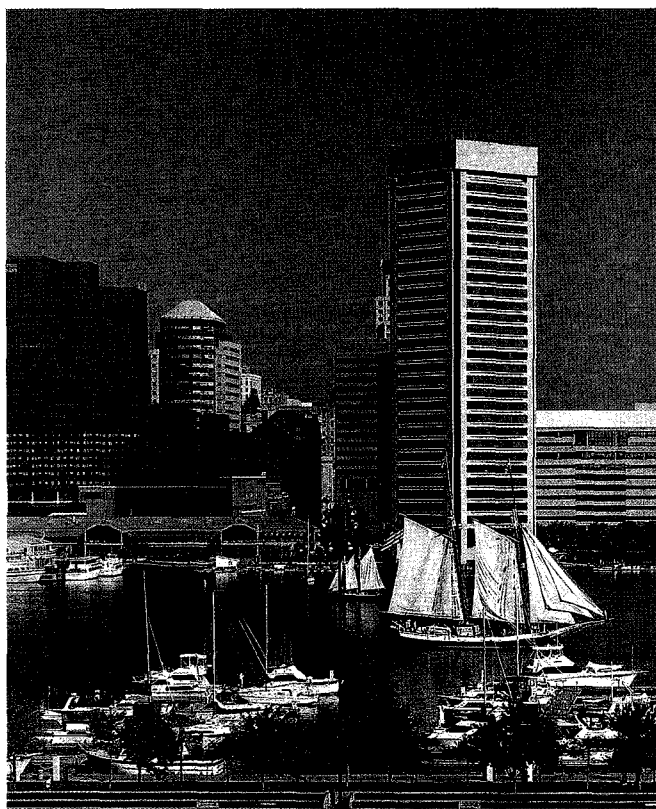
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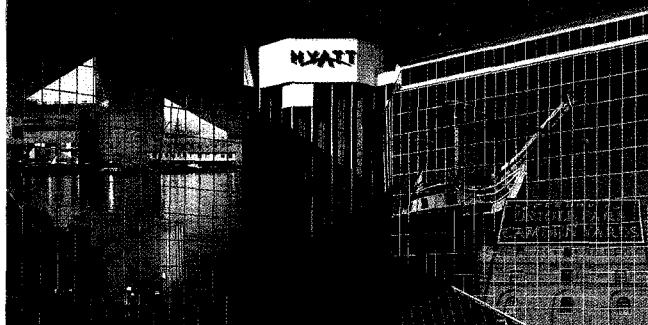
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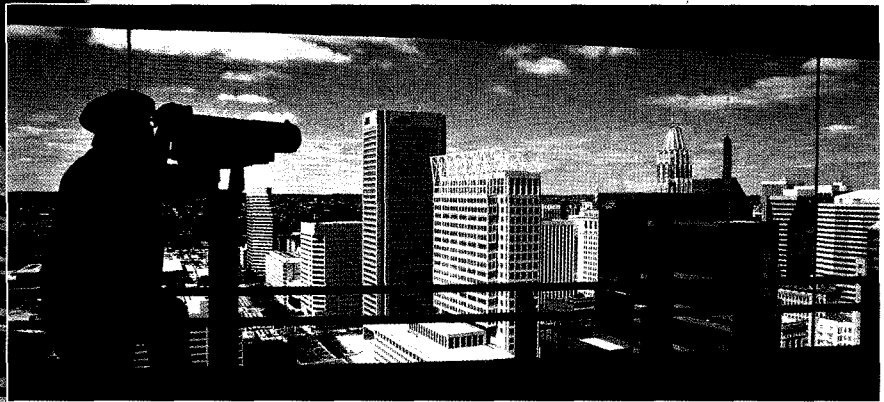
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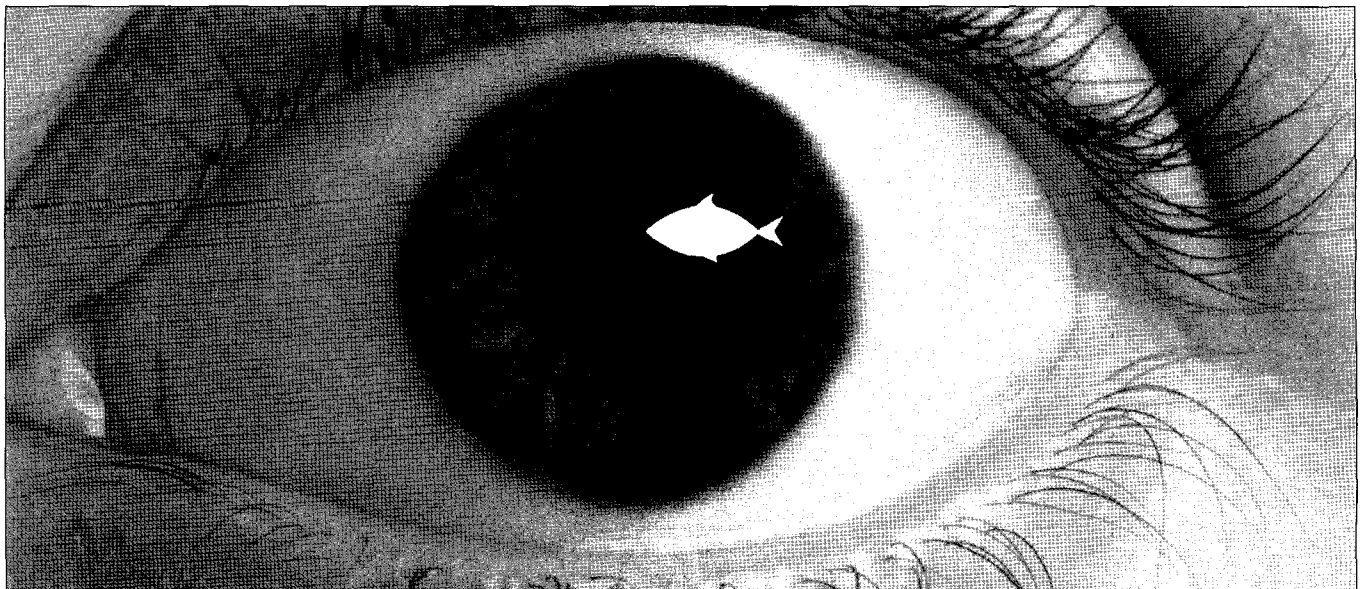


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line of a two-lane highway, between two speeding eighteen-wheelers. I've been playing this game for seven years now, and, brother, I can honestly say I've never seen anyone do that with a Precept.

THERE'S a tremendous amount of money in America these days, and quite a bit of it belongs to aggressively self-confident people who love golf: retired corporate chairmen, bored hotshot bond traders, former professional athletes, wealthy founders of software companies, prominent television commentators. Such people sometimes decide suddenly that they would like to play golf all the time, hang around with famous tour players, get rich all over again, read about themselves in *Fortune*, and revitalize their lives by applying their financial genius to their favorite pastime. They scoop up a few of their surplus millions and invest them in some golf-related enterprise, and pretty soon they start talking about how they're going to lock horns with the giants of the industry.

One person who fits that profile is Rudy Slucker, a wealthy New Jersey guy who retired from his first career—as an importer and marketer—in 1990, at the age of forty. In 1996, he took over a small, struggling putter company called TearDrop. In the years since then, through several acquisitions, he has turned TearDrop into a sort of mini-conglomerate of failed or failing golf brands, among them Tommy Armour, Ram, and Zebra. Slucker's intention, according to a press release I picked up at the show, is to make TearDrop “one of the golf industry's leading suppliers of premium golf clubs.” The long-term odds are probably not very good, but to Slucker—and to many people like him—the example of Ely Callaway must seem almost irresistible. Needless to say, Slucker has taken his company public.

Partly because of people like Rudy Slucker, it is nearly impossible today for a tired old golf brand to simply disappear. Several insiders I talked to at the merchandise show complained that there are now far too many golf companies chasing far too few dollars—yet practically every time a struggling golf

business seems ready to collapse, somebody with a lot of money props it up again. Tommy Armour golf clubs were extremely popular just a few years ago, but the company fell on hard times and would have almost certainly vaporized if Rudy Slucker (or someone like him) hadn't come along at just the right moment. And even when companies do disappear, the golf universe doesn't contract. An editor at a major golf publication told me, “You see all these guys who are in trouble, yet for every one of them who goes out of business there are thirty more lined up to take his place.”

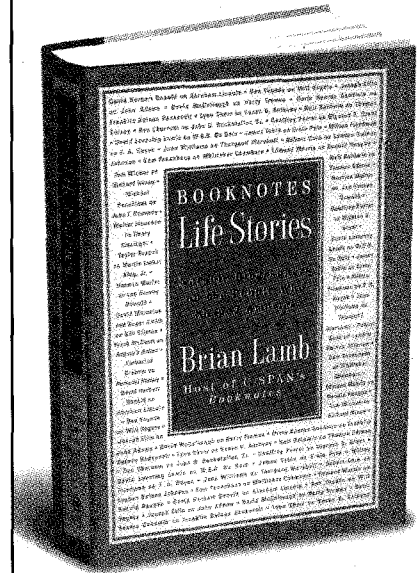
From a golfer's point of view, such commotion is simultaneously mesmerizing and depressing. As I wandered happily through the labyrinth of aisles at the merchandise show, I was also aware that the main result of all that desperate selling was going to be a more expensive hobby for me. The great paradox of the golf industry is that increased competition has tended to drive prices up rather than down, because it has forced manufacturers to fight for market share by investing heavily in new products—or, at least, new packages—and then promoting them like crazy. In the past few years, for example, Top-Flite has introduced balls that are slightly larger than usual (to make them curve less and therefore supposedly stay out of trouble); balls that contain small



amounts of titanium in their covers (for “explosive distance”) and small amounts of tungsten in their cores (for “amazing soft feel”); balls with ovate rather than circular dimples (for a reason I've never understood); balls supposedly designed to be struck by Callaway golf clubs; balls supposedly designed to be struck by Taylor Made golf clubs; and three-part balls containing a “New Ultra Soft High Energy Core for distance and feel,” an “Ionomer Mantle layer for increased distance,” and, with all due respect to Nike, a “soft shear resistant Zynthane II cover for pinpoint accuracy.”

An article in the business section of the *Times* last December hypothesized that the golf industry's main problem was “a lack of new products to excite golfers.” If that's the lesson the manufacturers took home from the merchandise show, golfers are in big trouble. ♦

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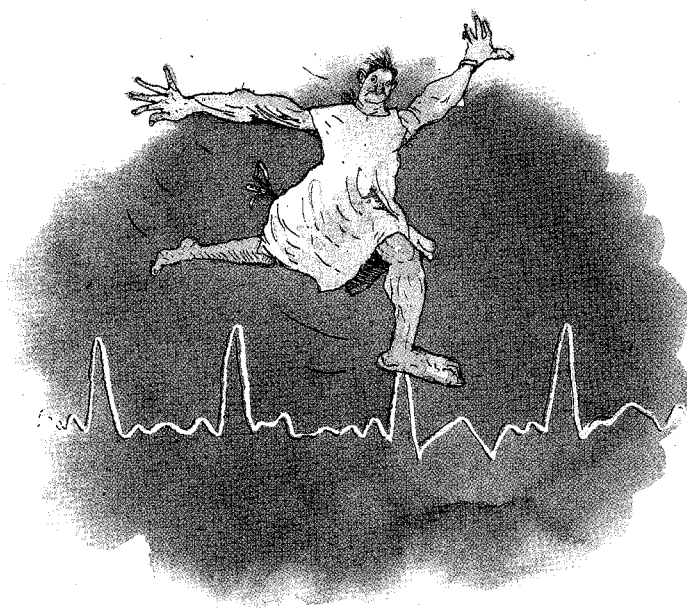
TAKING THE BYPASS

A healthy man's nightmare.

BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

MORE than a year ago, I had bypass surgery. One of the side effects of such surgery is said to be depression, though going into the operation I was a good bit more concerned about death. I have, I suppose, the normally skeptical and mildly dark

feel that way myself, and perhaps one day I shall, but at the moment I still feel that something more momentous has happened, and I think it may make more sense to try to get at what it is now, rather than to wait for yet more time to erase the sharp lines of recent memory.



"I'm sorry," my cardiologist told me, "but you failed the test."

views suitable to a man of my years—sixty-two of them—yet I believed that I did not have the attention span to sustain a lengthy depression, or at least I thought I didn't. Now I am less sure.

There must be several million Americans who have come through bypass surgery—the Harvard Heart Letter estimates that half a million such operations were done last year—yet it is exceedingly difficult to get a clear picture of all that such surgery entails, even though hospitals do try to educate patients about what they will go through. Most people feel somewhat heroic for having survived it; they block out the more hellish aspects of it; and they tend, in time, to look at it as a piece of repair work, like a ring job or a change of fan belts on an automobile. I wish I could

As for depression, I had already gone through a good patch of it—nicely mixed with fear—when I was told that I might have to have the operation, officially called a coronary-artery bypass graft (C.A.B.G.), and referred to by cardiologists as "cabbage." I have known a number of people who have had bypass surgery, and I have one friend who, having had a heart attack at thirty-nine, has been through it twice. Yet, however common the surgery may be, it is an operation I dreaded as soon as I first heard about it, twenty-five or so years ago. In locker rooms, I saw men with lengthy zipperish chest scars and shuddered.

I cannot say that I devoted my life to avoiding a bypass, but I did what I thought was a fair amount to ward off the possibility. I am five feet seven, have

weighed between a hundred and thirty and a hundred and thirty-five pounds for years, and generally pass for slender. For the most part, I have watched my diet—I used to joke that for me cheating on my wife meant eating steak on a business trip. I haven't smoked cigarettes for nearly twenty years. For most of my forties, I played racquetball, and after a hip injury made that no longer possible I acquired the monstrous appliance called the Nordic Walk-Fit, on which I strode, Louis Armstrong and Jack Teagarden tapes accompanying me, for thirty minutes every other day. I have, in short, been a fairly good boy.

Perhaps this is the place to mention that I consider myself a Jewish Scientist, the rough equivalent of a Christian Scientist—at least, as far as that church's view of medicine is concerned. I share the opinion of Proust, whose father and brother were doctors, and who himself required the aid of doctors all his days but wrote, "To believe in medicine would be the height of folly, if not to believe in it were not a greater folly still." So I go to doctors hesitantly, grudgingly, a bit nervously.

Having said all this, I have to add that I like my internist, an intelligent and lucid man named Harry Jaffe, and perhaps the last man in America to be given the name Harry. A long time ago, I adopted the policy of calling all physicians who address me by my first name by their first names, and so Harry and I have been on a first-name basis for many years. Like him greatly though I do, I had been able to avoid seeing Harry for five golden years, and would probably have continued to do so but for the inconvenient fact of my sixtieth birthday, on which I promised my wife that I would have a physical. I went in for it, stripped, took an EKG, had blood drawn, let Harry feel me for frightening lumps and bumps, and answered almost all his fact-finding questions with a smug "No." He said he would call me in a week or so. When he did, he said that all seemed well, but the results of my cholesterol tests were a bit odd. My over-all cholesterol number was an enviable 169, and my so-called "bad" cholesterol was all right, but my "good" cholesterol was much lower than it ought to be. No urgency about this, but Harry thought I ought to take a stress

test, just to make sure that everything was O.K.

Two or three weeks later I did, carrying a pair of gym shoes into the office of a youngish cardiologist on Central Street, in Evanston, Illinois, where I live. An agreeable nurse wired my chest and ankles to various monitoring devices. The cardiologist, a man with small round glasses and wearing khakis and a dark shirt and necktie, faced his heart-monitoring equipment as I stepped onto a treadmill and began walking briskly to nowhere. I had heard of men and women having heart attacks during stress tests; a common figure of speech was that, after a stress test, nurses had to "peel you off the wall." Mine proved no difficulty. Though the speed of the treadmill increased to three different levels, I found myself scarcely breathing heavily; until the third level, I was still talking with the cardiologist, about Comiskey Park and his being a White Sox fan. After ten minutes, he turned off the machine, and asked me to sit on an examining table. I was still not breathing all that heavily.

"I'm sorry," he said, "but you failed the test."

"Failed it," I said, amazed.

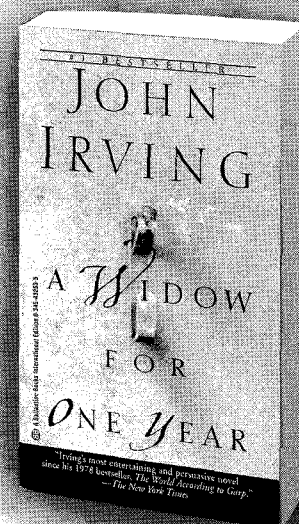
"Yes, certain abnormalities have shown up. Get dressed and we'll talk about it."

The cardiologist told me that under stress my blood pressure went down, whereas most people's went up; and he added that after stress my EKG took a suspiciously long time to return to its normal pattern. He said that he was going to prescribe some nitroglycerine pills for me and that he strongly suggested that I make an appointment—and make one soon—to take an angiogram. I didn't like the mention of nitroglycerine. Why not also prescribe knee and elbow pads, so that I wouldn't scrape myself if I collapsed on the pavement from a heart attack?

"Look," I told him, "I am so damn put off by this news that I am not about to make any quick decisions about angiograms or anything else."

I had heard that people sometimes had strokes from an angiogram, a procedure that probes in dangerous places, and I asked whether there were other tests. He told me that there were two: a stress-echo test, which was more sophisticated than the test I had just taken, and

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a thallium stress test, which was more thorough still. I signed on for a stress-echo test, which I took a week later. The same abnormalities showed up.

I SENT the results of all the tests to my dear friend Paul McHugh, a Bostonian who was trained as a neurologist and psychiatrist and is now the chief of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins, and he immediately showed them to the chief of cardiology there. Paul called that same day to tell me that the tests didn't necessarily mean I had arterial blockage. The chief of cardiology said that it could be five or six other things, including a viral condition, but he also suggested that I have an angiogram. The angiogram is the definitive test; it is, as Harry Jaffe told me, "the gold standard" in these matters.

(A word about metaphors, euphemisms, dysphemisms, and other peculiar uses of language applied to the heart, itself perhaps the most metaphorized word in the English language. One of the first things one learns about cardiologists is that they divide into plain cardiologists and "invasive" ones; the latter invade the chest. The word "bypass" is also a metaphor, taken from the realm of freeways, highways, and roads, which itself borrows from that of the heart by sometimes referring to "arterial" roads. Clogged arteries are some-

times spoken of by people in the profession as filled with "plaque" or "rust." Healthy portions of the arteries beyond the blockage are called "good targets." Having a bypass is sometimes referred to as damming and changing the flow of one's coronary bloodstream so as to get around the blockage, or dam, as if the entire thing were a river, or series of rivers. Veins that are used to form the actual bypass are "harvested." Of course, the most dramatic phrase of all is "open-heart surgery." I never refer to my own surgery as open heart—technically, I gather, it was open chest—because even now the term slightly chills me.)

I finally agreed to have an angiogram, a procedure that usually takes less than an hour and doesn't require the patient to be put under general anesthesia or even to stay in the hospital overnight. The five or six people I know who had had angiograms assured me that the procedure was painless. Strokes or other mishaps occurred, I was told, but only in one of every two thousand cases. (This didn't provide all that much comfort. Didn't they realize that I, like you, am one in a million?) I was given a nice cocktail of tranquilizers before the angiogram began. I also asked to hear music while it was going on: Haydn, as it turned out. Yet another cardiologist, this time an invasive one, made an inci-

sion in my right groin and a cannula probe was inserted into the femoral artery and threaded up into my heart. An injection of dye permitted a green-and-black X-ray film to be made, which showed the flow of blood through my coronary arteries. Such was the power of the tranquilizers I had been given that I even watched part of the film—something I would normally be too squeamish to do. The only unpleasant part of the procedure was that I had to lie on my back afterward for nearly six hours with a ten-pound sandbag on my groin to make certain that the puncture in my artery didn't bleed.

The next day, my second cardiologist called to set up an appointment. Because he sensed that I was critical-minded, he said that he wanted me to watch the angiogram all the way through. He said that the film showed my heart to be quite healthy, but it also showed three arteries with odd constrictions, which meant blockage—not the most deadly blockage but serious enough, in his opinion, to call for bypass surgery. This cardiologist, I should mention, had earlier told me that he thought of himself as conservative, which in these matters meant that he didn't look to surgery for all solutions. But he said that he thought my angiogram required surgery.

"Let me ask you this," I said. "If this were your angiogram, would you agree to surgery?"

He hesitated just a moment, then said, with what I thought astonishing candor, "No."

"Then neither will I," I said. "I'll rely instead on your treating my condition with medication."

I left his office with prescriptions for a beta-blocker and for a cholesterol-lowering drug called Lipitor. I was also to take Vitamin E pills and a baby aspirin for fourteen days, then a double dose of adult aspirin on the fifteenth day. For now, at any rate, I had avoided the knife. Paul McHugh sympathized with my antipathy to surgery. "You don't want these guys putting their



hands inside your chest, Joe," he had told me, in his strong Boston accent. "Not a good idea." I sent my angiogram to him at Johns Hopkins.

JOE, Paul," my friend's voice boomed on the phone. "I hate this, but I have terrible news. I showed your test to both the head of cardiology and the chief cardiologist here, and they think you don't have much choice. You really do have to undergo the surgery. God, pal, I wish it were otherwise, but I knew you would want the real lowdown."

The truth was, I didn't want the real lowdown. I still wanted above all to avoid the surgery. I asked that not very deep philosophical question "Why me?" (The best answer I have been able to come up with is genetics: my father had a heart attack in his late fifties and bypass surgery at seventy-nine, and now, at ninety-one, he has congestive heart failure, which, given his age, I call "congestive heart success.") Yet I knew that it was only a matter of time before I would have to give in and agree to surgery. Paul had explained to me that, in addition to the three constricted arteries, I had what is known as "silent ischemia." Cardiac ischemia is the condition in which the heart is not receiving enough blood, and the "silent" indicated that I had potential heart trouble without any symptoms: no shortness of breath, no arrhythmia, no angina. This meant that I could have a major heart attack without any warning whatsoever: one day run to catch a plane and, pow!—gone.

I love life too much to agree to early death; there were too many half-finished dramas whose completion I wished to know. I would have to submit to the surgery. Like one of those figures on the surgical table in an Eakins painting, the swamp of my slithery insides would be exposed, my darkest interior invaded. I recall telling my wife that I looked upon this surgery as tantamount to having to face a vicious bully, who was going to beat the hell out of me, but it was the price of getting back into school, and, since I wanted back in, there was nothing for it but to take my beating.

Paul suggested that if I wanted to have the surgery done at Johns Hopkins he could arrange it. But the complications of out-of-town surgery seemed too elaborate. Besides, Evanston Hospital did a great deal of "cabbage," and, ac-

cording to Paul's research of the matter, it had quite a good reputation. So I made an appointment with John Alexander, the chief of cardiac surgery there. He turned out to be eight or nine years younger than I, a Southerner, educated and trained at Duke, a straightforward man with no noticeable vanity apart from a penchant for bow ties. (I happen to be a bow-tie man myself, and so find this an eminently pardonable vanity.) He was roughly six feet tall, with gray hair, receded and modestly parted. Like other surgeons I have met, he has some of the bearing, the combined confidence and implied courage, of a test pilot. I noted his hands, which seemed to me neither artistically tapered nor especially strong but perfectly ordinary. How many hundreds of hearts had they held? (He told me that he averaged four or five bypass operations a week.) These were the hands that would handle and stitch away at my own heart.

When I met him for a presurgical interview, Dr. Alexander—no John, no Joe between us—played my angiogram film, which was not more enjoyable the second time around, and told me I would require a triple bypass, but that, given the healthy condition of my heart and of my good-target arteries, beyond the blockages, there was every chance of a successful outcome to the operation.

As he looked over my dossier, he noted that I taught at Northwestern University and asked me what I taught.

"Literature," I said.

"My poorest subject as an undergraduate," he said.

"I hope you'll be able to block that out during the surgery," I said.

We set a date eight days later for the bypass. Before I left, I told him that I was greatly spooked by this operation.

"I find," he said, "that the more intelligent a person is, the more spooked he or she is. And you're right to be spooked. This is serious stuff, but you're going to come through all right."

I liked him.

OWING, I am sure, to insurance-company policy, one no longer spends the night before surgery in the hospital, which was just as well with me. My son and daughter-in-law and their infant son had come from California to be with my wife while I was in the hospital. We ate dinner at a nearby Italian restaurant. I took a Valium and went

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to bed at ten-thirty and slept without nightmare until five the next morning, when I showered using a special disinfectant soap prescribed before surgery.

I reported to Evanston Hospital at six-fifteen, left my watch, wedding ring, and glasses with my wife, got into one of those wretched hospital gowns (designed, clearly, by "a pervert," as a nurse who had fitted me out in one for my angiogram said), and prepared to let the games begin.

I don't recall if they gave me another tranquillizer before they took me down to prep me, but for some reason suppression of terror was not a problem. A nurse attached an I.V. with anesthesia to my wrist, and the next thing I knew I was in intensive care, slowly coming awake. I remember being pleased that I had no breathing tube nor any scratchiness in my throat which such tubes can cause, and I felt a blurred sense of elation.

What I missed was written up by Dr. Alexander, who in the first sentence of the second paragraph of his surgical report states, "While the electrocardiogram and arterial blood pressure were being monitored, the patient was anesthetized, positioned, prepped and draped as a sterile field." ("Like a patient, etherised upon a table," you might say.) I was connected to a heart-and-lung machine that kept my

heart beating and sustained my breathing. An incision was made from the back of my left knee up along the front of my thigh stopping high on my groin, where the vein graft was "harvested." My sternum was cracked open, or as Dr. Alexander put it, "a median sternotomy was performed," to gain entry to my chest. My left ventricle was "found to have normal characteristics." Meanwhile, "the aorta and right atrium were cannulated for arterial flow and venous return." The vein graft was connected to those arteries whose blockages were cut away. Then "the aortic cross clamp was applied and cold blood cardio plegia was administered." Even now I do not read this without a tremor of the spirit. "The total time of cardiopulmonary bypass was 112 minutes." I was thus on the heart-and-lung machine for a little less than two hours. Paul McHugh told me that danger lay in that apparatus. "Guys our age can lose neurons on it," he said, "and we don't have all that many to lose."

I do recall a nurse with a worried look hovering over me in intensive care. I don't know how much time passed—it was, in fact, nearly two o'clock the following morning—but Dr. Alexander was also standing nearby, in full surgical getup, telling me that we would have to go back into the operating room. I re-

member saying, "This sounds like a very bad idea to me."

I had developed something called a mediastinal clot on the right side of my heart. I remember my gurney rolling; I remember, through a flickering consciousness, lights of a tremendous yellowish intensity. God, I thought, I'm not going to be awake for this. Surely not? Did I dream this? Or did consciousness peep through? I shall never know. I was reopened, the clot was cleared, and, to quote Dr. Alexander again, "a single 7-0 suture controlled this area of bleeding." Then I awoke to the pleasing sight of my wife and son standing by my bed, telling me that I looked quite well.

And the truth was I felt pretty damn good. I felt both lucid and elated, full of optimism and good will. John Alexander later told me that

this was not uncommon. After bypass surgery, he said, patients are at first just so pleased to be alive that their adrenaline does fine things for them. "It's only on the second day," he added, "that they realize they've been hit by a truck."

IT was on the third day that it really hit me. I was sitting on a chair in the bathroom of my private room being sponge bathed by a pretty and cheerful young nurse named Laura, when I got a look at myself and the scars on my chest, closed my eyes, and sighed deeper than I have ever done.

I stayed in the hospital five days. Therapy requires the patient to walk the halls as soon as possible, and this I did, with the aid of nurses or of my wife. I lost all appetite, but my recovery was apparently normal. I had nothing to complain about, but this didn't stop me from complaining, especially about three devices whose connecting tubes and wires were sewn into my chest. One, a machine the size of a thick attaché case, was connected to two tubes that helped clear my lungs of blood and other fluids; another, a telemetry device connected to a heavy remote, monitored my heart on a screen at a nurses' station thirty yards away; and the third, another heavy remote, was attached to a pace-

maker, which was supposed to kick in if I needed it. Because of these machines, I had to sleep on my back. When I went to the bathroom, I had to pick them up and drag them in with me; each time I did so I felt as if I were going on a trip to Detroit. Once, I must have brushed my teeth too vigorously, for a nurse, noting undue activity on the telemetry machine, rushed into the bathroom, slightly panicked, to see what was wrong.

Recovery at home was steady but slow. I felt a burning sensation along the path of the surgical scars on my chest and left thigh, and some mornings, after a ten-hour sleep, breakfast, and a run through the *Times*, I found myself so exhausted that I had to return to bed for two more hours' sleep. I was no longer attached to machines, but sometimes I felt a heaviness, as if I were wearing the medals of a Soviet field marshal pinned not to a uniform but to the skin of my chest. I was given painkillers—a generic version of Tylenol 3, with codeine—which helped, but could not relieve all the discomfort. After this surgery, one realizes how many things one needs the muscles of one's chest for: most lifting, blowing one's nose, and defecating, to name only three. Twice, I sneezed rather violently, and thought I had blown my chest open and would have to pick my heart up off the floor. My wife did a vast amount for me in the first weeks, from putting on my tight white anti-embolism socks to helping me in and out of bed to standing outside the shower lest I grow faint and conk out. One night, I was so weak she had to help me squeeze the toothpaste onto my brush.

The psychological effects have been more enduring. People who have had surgery tell me that in time one comes to cherish one's scars, perhaps as decorations recording the battles one has survived. Mine, when I view them in the mirror, still surprise and slightly scare me, but less so with the passage of time. In the first months after the operation, as I looked at my torn-up body—my chest, which resembled a poor imitation of Frankenstein's monster; my left leg, which looked like the unfinished lunch of a Doberman pinscher—I realized again that bypass surgery is a brutal piece of work, even though I hope one day to be able to say that I owe it to many added years of life. I suspect that

before long it will be replaced by something keener and cleaner, less devastating, perhaps something to do with a laser. Future, ahistorical generations may someday ask, "Bypass surgery—wasn't that something done during the McCarthy era?"

In the long view, I know I have to count myself lucky. In Harry Jaffe I had an excellent internist, who called for a stress test when another physician might have done nothing more than encourage a change in diet. In John Alexander I had a talented surgeon who was willing to return to the job at two in the morning to get it right. In Paul McHugh I had a man of great spirit and good humor with a real genius for friendship, and one who has stayed on the case and continued for months after the operation to check on my well-being. My recovery has gone without anything like a serious hitch. Everyone predicted I would, in time, be as good as new, though I myself wonder.

I still feel an abiding vulnerability I hadn't felt before. The surgery has left me with what I can only call heart-consciousness. I turn over in bed at night and hear my heart, and feel less in control of my destiny. Rationality, of which I have always considered myself a devotee, has its distinct limits, and one of them is over the fate of my body: it will check out when it is ready, not, as I should prefer, when I am. All this was true, of course, before my bypass surgery, but now it seems more than merely true—I know it to be ineluctably true.

A few weeks before my operation, I happened to read the Dutch writer Harry Mulisch's excellent novel "The Assault." Mulisch's protagonist is an anesthesiologist, who had "the more or less mystical notion that the narcotics [of anesthesia] did not make the patient insensitive to pain so much as unable to express that pain, and that although drugs erased the memory of pain, the patient was nevertheless changed by it." Mystical though the notion may be, I can't help feeling that there is something to it. This surgery has been a major event in my otherwise fairly quiet life—one that has changed me, decidedly, decisively, definitively. How, precisely, I cannot yet say. All I can say is that in more ways than one my heart has been touched, and I am not, and shall never again be, quite the same person. ♦



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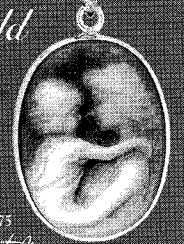
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MIRACLE MAN

*He was America's most flamboyant radio faith healer,
the first to build an evangelical empire upon a mail-order ministry.
Nothing, however, could save him from his enemies.*

BY PETER J. BOYER

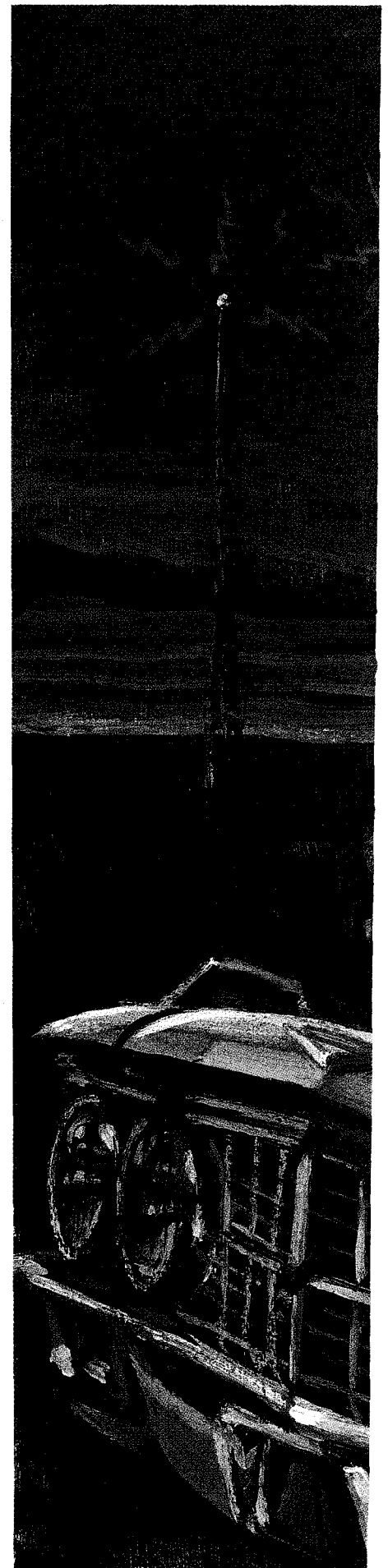
I HAD not seen the Reverend J. Charles Jessup in more than twenty years, since before his ruin, and when I did see him again, in the spring of 1991, at his home in Mississippi, the transformation so startled me that I feared my reaction would show. His hair, once thick and wavy black, had gone white, and the blazing eyes, which had transfixed a multitude of sinners, were now pinkish, and dim. The Reverend must have seen through me, because he hurled himself to the kitchen floor and started doing one-handed pushups. I wanted to stop him but couldn't think how, so I watched dumbly until he got up and grunted, "That's fifty. I could do sixty." In his youth, when he had the looks and build of John Garfield, displays of strength had been part of his repertoire. He once made his way on a revival tour from Millington, Tennessee, to Tampa, Florida, without paying for a single tank of gas: people couldn't resist wagering against a preacher's being able to lift the front end of a Model A Ford off the ground. Sometimes he'd preach for an hour carrying a hundred-pound sack of oats on his back, just to set up the effect of reaching in and tossing the grain out over the congregation while quoting Paul's warning about the wild life: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." These were things I had not seen, but I had heard them told a hundred times. My mother is an evangelist, and for a time she had helped run Reverend Jessup's ministry. In the world of my youth, which was populated by itinerant prophets, preachers, and mystics, J. Charles Jessup occupied his own exalted realm: he was said to have been the role model for both Oral Roberts and Elvis Presley, and even now, after everything that happened, I believe he was.

After our lunch, a thick gumbo served with corn bread and sweet tea,

Reverend Jessup took me into the living room of his house, a modest brick ranch, to tell me some of the old stories, and it was for them that I had come. The room was strewn with boxes, as if he hadn't yet settled into the house, though he'd been in it for six years. He said he had come back to Mississippi after his exile because this was where he thought he should be: home. Yet the exile hadn't really ended, and wouldn't end. Reverend Jessup had always hoped to spend his last days in a different house—the house he'd owned for so long that it had come to be known all along the Mississippi coast, and even in the search warrant that federal agents carried on the day they arrested him, simply as "the Jessup place." It was the prize he had awarded himself in the full bloom of success: a fourteen-room cottage, white with a tin roof, on a prime location facing the beach. The house was half a block from the handsomest and most famous home on the Mississippi coast: Beauvoir, the last residence of Jefferson Davis.

Along one side of the Jessup land there once stood several small wooden outbuildings, where the mail was handled; these had served as the headquarters of Jessup's Fellowship Revival Association. In the center of the property, and scattered throughout, were two dozen or more small wooden tepees, about two and a half feet high, which housed Reverend Jessup's prized chickens. These were not barnyard-variety chickens, as my mother liked to suppose, but big, muscled birds with black breasts and proud scarlet plumage, which had been painstakingly bred and trained for the single purpose of killing other birds. Cockfighting was one of Reverend Jessup's enthusiasms—"a hobby o' mine," he used to say.

Across from the association offices, Jessup had parked his cars—a Lincoln



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Pentecostalist J. Charles Jessup hot-wired the hopes of desperate people to God's everlasting promise. But not all his passions were spiritual.

and a Cadillac—next to two tractor-trailer rigs, which contained the big Ringling Brothers tent and poles and folding chairs that he used for his revival meetings. It seemed a strangely compelling place to me when I was a boy, and I spent many hours there, although what fascinated me most was something that Reverend Jessup kept hidden away: the artifacts of his calling—the miracles. Jessup was a faith healer, and a good one, to judge by the number of people who sent in faith donations and by the fervor of authorities bent on jailing him. Any good preacher is a good salesman, and in Jessup's line samples were needed, so he kept a collection of crutches, braces, and orthopedic shoes, along with more exotic evidence of the powers of his "Prayer of Faith." Among these were a coffee can with a man's gallstones inside and a fruit jar containing the crippling calluses that had been peeled away from a woman's feet by an angel of the Lord in answer to Reverend Jessup's prayers. Toward the end of the time when I knew him, the tent and the miracles and the trucks

were used less frequently, and some of the staff worried that Reverend Jessup was spending too much time up in the house, with his beautiful young Mexican wife. But when he was around and about, a greeting from J. Charles Jessup was its own reward. He spoke in a soft, high voice with a cadence that was peculiarly his own, its emphasis placed on words as if for musical effect rather than for meaning; it was like a spoken rumba with a Mississippi drawl. "Good mornin', it's a *fine* day, a tonic just to *see* you!" he would say, and you felt like dancing.

That is how things were the last time I had seen Reverend Jessup, in 1966. I was fourteen, and he took my father and me fishing in the Gulf of Mexico from his seaplane. The Reverend knew all the lucky places in the Mississippi Sound, and although he had a fine old boat called the Orpah, the plane gave him an added advantage. He flew low over the water, scanning it for schools of fish, then strategically set down, promising, "We're gonna catch us a *mess* of fish today." By lunchtime, our string was filled with big redfish and Spanish mack-

erel. On the way back, Reverend Jessup passed over the leeward side of Chan-deleur Island, a narrow, uninhabited barrier island twenty-five miles offshore, where he sometimes went to pray and fast—and to fish. "Right down there at that *spot*," he said to my father, "is where those gov'ment men tried to *kill* me." He said he'd been alone in his tent, bent in prayer, when he heard the sound of an approaching airplane, and, when he went outside to investigate, the big plane, with government markings, swooped down from the sky and dove right at him. "I hit the ground, and it just like to pull all the *hair* out of my *head*," he said. "They were gonna kill me out there."

I was squeezed into the back of the plane with the gear and the fish, but not a word escaped me. It was the most direct reference I had yet heard to what my mother referred to as "Charles's difficulties," which had been vaguely explained as the work of an ill-meaning alliance of jealous preachers, the government, and the Devil. I sensed, though, that Reverend Jessup's troubles had something to do with the seaplane, which is to say with his life style—the plane, the boat, the cars, the chickens, and the beautiful young wife. Long before such fallen preachers as Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart would amuse the late-night comics, Jessup had become a wealthy man by hot-wiring the hopes of desperate people to God's everlasting promise. Now he had stopped bothering—if he had ever bothered at all—to disguise his earthly impulses with pretenses of humble piety. Was that wrong? I was not yet of an age or a temperament to make moral judgments, but I had my opinion: I liked Reverend Jessup. When my dog was killed by a car, he had given me an Airedale pup; when I wanted to start a rock-and-roll band with some pals, he lent me his Gibson. I liked going to his place to watch the Ole Miss games on his big color television, which always had clear reception because of a huge remote-controlled antenna he'd had installed on the roof. But I also figured that whatever was coming to J. Charles Jessup it would be, as Paul wrote to the Galatians, the harvest he had sown.

Back then, I had no idea at all of the degree to which his circumstances had already altered our own lives. When I returned to Mississippi years later to see Jessup, it was at the invitation of my



"I'm a Schedule D kind of guy with a little Schedule E thrown in."

mother, his friend of fifty years and one of the few friends who had remained steadfast through his ordeal and after. She knew of my interest in Jessup's story, which was part of her story, too, and asked me to join her in a visit to her old friend. She was by then living on the West Coast, and we met at the airport in New Orleans. As we drove to Mississippi, she urged tolerance. "'We have this treasure in earthen vessels,'" she said, quoting from II Corinthians. "But Charles had a gift that was very real."

IN the years between 1908 and 1927, Walter and Maude Jessup, of Gulfport, Mississippi, had nine children, seven of them boys, and all seven Jessup brothers became preachers of the Gospel. They really had no choice. When the Jessup children were young, Maude was stricken gravely ill. Walter had no money for a specialist, so one of Maude's brothers paid for her transfer from the hospital in Gulfport to the hospital in the state capital, Jackson, where doctors diagnosed kidney cancer and gave her just weeks to live. She returned home in an ambulance and was carried to her bed on a stretcher. Her eyes were sunken, her lips had lost color, and her bones were pushing at her skin. Walter Jessup, seeing in this catastrophe a providential challenge, summoned his boys one by one to their mother's bedside, and asked each of them to make a bargain with God. "If your mother does not die, will you preach the Gospel?" he asked his sons, and each in turn vowed that he would. Over the years, J. Charles Jessup would fit that story into any sermon on any subject, never failing to break down and cry when he came to the inevitable conclusion: in one month Maude Jessup was able to get out of bed and walk with a cane; in six months she was walking without the cane; and a year after being pronounced terminally ill she was completely healed. "And," he told his congregations, "she lived forty years after *that*."

Even without so dramatic a prompting, Jessup seemed destined for the pulpit. He was born in 1916, at a moment when a strange and powerful new brand of religion was loose in America—a spiritual convulsion called Pentecostalism, which seized thousands and then millions of Americans, including the Jessups, and fractured the culture in ways that are quite apparent even now.

The "religious right" has its roots in the Pentecostal movement, but to focus merely on that visible segment understates the movement's force and reach: Pentecostal churches, born in the twentieth century, have become the largest Protestant body in the world, as the traditional denominations—the churches that grew out of the Reformation—have withered. This new faith arrived at the dawn of the technological age, just when America was becoming more urban and more affluent. The new religion was a quintessential American impulse, revivalist in tone and highly individualistic—a rebellion against structure and form and, particularly, against the rationalistic direction of the mainstream faiths.

Pentecostalism began, appropriately, in the American heartland. Charles Fox Parham, its founder, was a former Methodist minister who had come to believe that the final days were near and that the power of the Holy Spirit, prophesied in the Old Testament by Joel and made manifest to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, was again available to every Christian who sought it. Teachings on the gifts of the Holy Spirit had languished since the time of St. Augustine, but Parham and his followers took Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost at its face: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. . . . And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke." Parham, at his Bible school, near Topeka, Kansas, taught his students to seek "baptism" in the Holy Spirit, which, he said, would be evidenced by the same sign that had been shown to the Apostles: speaking in tongues. In an all-night prayer session on December 31, 1900, as the nineteenth century became the twentieth, one of Parham's students, Agnes Ozman, asked Parham to lay hands on her and pray that she would be filled with the Spirit. She began speaking in tongues, and was unable to communicate in English for the next three days, and soon the rest of Parham's students were speaking in tongues. The Pentecostal movement had arrived.



Parham took his "apostolic faith" movement to Houston, where he established another Bible school, and one of his students there took the new message to Los Angeles, which was even then a magnet for exotic religions. The convert, a half-blind black preacher named William Seymour, began a revival in a former stable on Azusa Street in April, 1906, and the meetings continued day and night for three and a half years. The event gained national attention and, more than fifty years before the civil-rights movement, drew the spiritually hungry of all races from all corners of the continent, who, in turn, returned home to spread the fire. The Pentecostals had unlocked God's own treasure box, closed for nineteen hundred years, and were revelling in its contents. They spoke in tongues, and then interpreted the holy message; they prophesied, and cast out demons; they laid hands on the sick, and healed afflictions. From the start, Pentecostalism was an outcast faith, but that only strengthened its appeal. If God's gifts were available to every Christian, regardless of color or sex or station, then blacks could lead mixed congregations, and women could preach. The new faith was striking in its egalitarianism, and its allure was particularly strong for those groups most alienated from conventional society. Theirs was a shared and primal drama, with the sweet ending of forgiveness and redemption for those who had only believed.

This was the faith into which J. Charles Jessup was born. His father, Walter, had studied at Parham's Houston Bible school, which made him one of Pentecostalism's first apostles. He preached every day, sometimes three or four times a day—on the streets, in tents, and, eventually, in several small churches he had started in towns throughout the South, for he was forever on the move, following his call. Often he brought along Maude and their growing family. In later years, the family would joke about their poverty, recalling a time when they dined on a road-killed guinea hen, but Charles, the third son, was impatient with the deprivations that went with his father's divine mission. Once, in a time of particular need, Maude took young Charles's hand and, kneeling in prayer,

asked God to provide her family with food, to which the boy added, "Not tomorrow but today, Lord!"

Charles was a tough kid, a scrapper, as the son of an itinerant Holy Roller had to be, and he had a bit of hell in him. In that culture, the hope of growing up to become a famous evangelist was an aspiration not so different from wanting to be a ballplayer, or a Grand Ole Opry star. Across the Mississippi, in Ferriday, Louisiana, three Pentecostal cousins named Jerry Lee Lewis, Mickey Gilley, and Jimmy Swaggart would vacillate between preaching the Gospel and playing music in honky-tonks—options that held roughly equal appeal. Charles decided that he would follow his father's calling, but not in his father's footsteps. Walter Jessup, stern and relentlessly pious, preached with earnest, undazzling conviction. Charles was determined to develop his own preaching style—a crowd-pleasing style, with plenty of hellfire, but with some fun in it, too. When he was twelve, he knew much of the Bible by heart, and he practiced preaching on street corners. Then, when he was fourteen, he got his chance to preach in a real church.

Walter Jessup was at that time the pastor of the First Assembly of God Church, in Memphis (it became Elvis's home church), and he prevailed upon a friend—a pastor in nearby Dyersburg, Tennessee—to give Charles and his younger brother Jimmie a little pulpit time. Jimmie quickly learned what the other Jessup brothers and their father would soon discover: there was one great preacher in the Jessup family, and it was Charles. On the first Sunday in July, 1930, with Jimmie at his side, Charles stepped to the pulpit and said in that soft voice of his that although he was just a boy, he had "a great big God" who "has led me and given me a great message." And then he quick-shifted into a non-stop shout, promising "to preach as if the world was coming to an end tomorrow." He went on, "I aim to make sin *black*, hell *hot*, death *certain*, and judgment *sure*. I may get happy and shout while preaching, or I may get burdened and weep for the lost—but I aim to do something or bust a hamstring!"

The actor and filmmaker Robert Duvall, who listened to Jessup in his youth and modelled the protagonist of his movie "The Apostle" partly on him, has

likened Charles Jessup in full throat to a human machine gun. Another Jessup watcher has called him "the Great Gasp"—a reference to the quick gulps of air that fuelled his otherwise uninterrupted exhortation. The mark of any great preacher is being able to soar and dive and then bring folks in for a smooth landing. Every sermon of Jessup's had its weepy place, its tender place, and its funny place, and he reduced the dense text of theology to simple storybook form: "God got *tired* of ol' Saul's pride. He got *tired* of his rebellion. He got *tired* of his sins. He got *tired* of his sins, and he levelled down his old gun on him and said, 'Saul, you had better get on with your hari-kari, I've got your number, and it sure is snake eyes!'"

From that first sermon, he had the congregation in his hands. The Dyersburg revival lasted the rest of the summer, and it became part of the Jessup legend that the congregation had had to build an addition to the little tabernacle in order to accommodate the crowds, yet people were still left standing outside and watching through the windows. It also became part of the legend that after several weeks the host pastor announced a special "love offering" for the Jessup boys, and about a hundred and fifty dollars was collected, of which the pastor kept all but a dollar for himself. Yet Charles had seen the crowds come and the plates fill, and he knew that with his calling came a kind of power, and that pleased him.

TO achieve his newly fired ambition, Charles struck a bold course: he would seek the gift of miraculous healing. But the Holy Spirit's gifts came at a price, and the price was giving oneself wholly to God—becoming, in other words, a modern saint. After a few failed tries, Charles concluded that the courtship of the miraculous—"Covet *earnestly* the best gifts," Paul had said—could be expedited by a display of determination and will: that the saintly life could, in effect, be compacted into one dramatic act of devotion. As Christmas approached in 1933, Charles commenced a vigil of prayer and fasting which would not end, he announced, until God revealed Himself and bestowed on him the gift of miraculous healing. Taking a room in the home of a member of one of Walter's congrega-

tions, near Tampa, Charles waited for the revelation, refusing food and taking only liquids. As he grew frailer and less coherent, his prayers took on a dreamy, and at times a nightmarish, aspect. He saw visions of the dead, and evil creatures dancing weirdly in a place he took to be Hell; he saw golden streets and terraced hills, which he construed as a glimpse of Heaven. In the fourth week, as he told the story, on his most desperate night, he read again the passage from Mark in which Christ says that His believers "shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," and he cried out to God for some sign that the gift would come. He heard the door open and close, though he knew that no one was there, and, looking up, he saw a vision of Jesus, holding forth one hand.

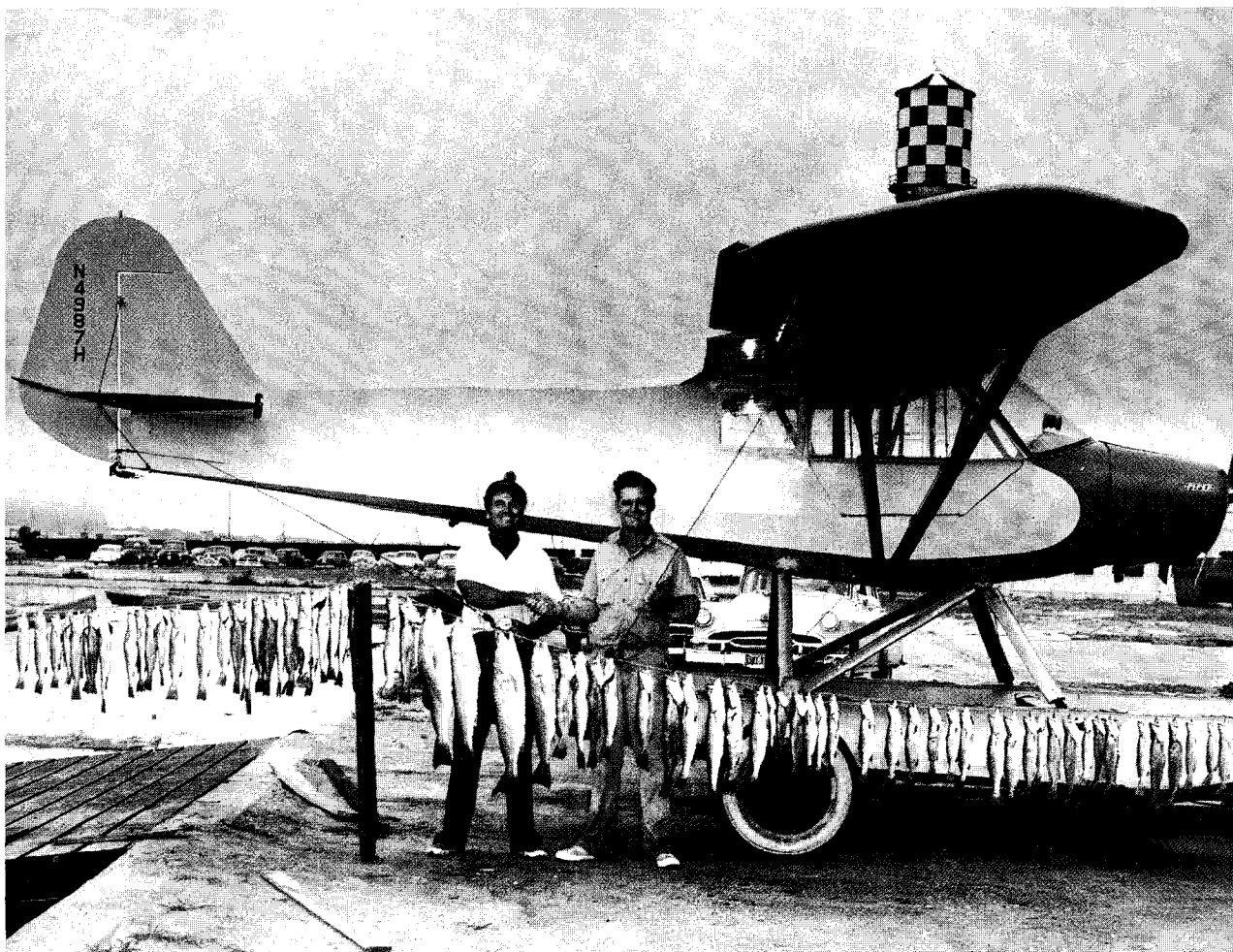
Weak but ecstatic, Charles left the prayer chamber and told his family the news of his experience. He had no doubt that he had been licensed by God to perform miracles in His name, and he was eager for the chance to use his new power. He asked his father if he could "make a statement" that night about his experience, at a service in the Ybor City section of Tampa, where Walter was holding a revival. His father agreed, and when the time came Charles proclaimed to those assembled, "The Lord appeared to me in my prayer and fastin', and he gave me the gifts of healin'. And if anybody will come up here now that wants to be healed, God will heal you now." This statement was perhaps more than what Walter Jessup expected, and even among a crowd receptive to miracles and wonders it was an astonishing declaration. One man came forward—a big, strapping man, who towered over Charles and looked to be at the peak of health. He said that his name was Bill Perry, that he was a railroad man from St. Paul, and that he had been forced to quit work because he suffered from epilepsy. "Can you cure me?" he asked Charles.

"No," Charles replied. "But the Lord can." Charles closed his eyes, lifted up his hands to Perry's head, and prayed. He then told Perry, "You are well! You will not have any more epileptic fits." The big man replied, "If that's true, I won't need this bottle of pills," whereupon he walked to the opening of the tent and tossed his medicine out into the darkness, among the parked cars.

Perry returned to the tent meeting three nights later, and testified that he had passed the time since without any seizures. He returned on the next night and testified the same thing, and then he took Charles and his father aside. He said that he believed he had been healed, that he wanted to show his gratitude. He had some money set aside from disability pay, he said, and he had

Pentecostals, and word spread quickly about the young preacher from Mississippi; soon the Ringling tent was packed with hopeful believers eager to see God's miracles for themselves. In Hattiesburg, Mississippi, a churchwoman known as Ma Green, who had been blind for years, answered Jessup's call and asked for his healing touch. "When he prayed for her, the scum ran down out of her

Mrs. Nellie Prescott slowly and painfully answered Jessup's call, asking healing for her crippled feet, grotesquely twisted by a birth defect. After Jessup laid his hands on her and prayed, she triumphantly marched up and down the aisles on straightened feet as the crowd issued praises and thanks to God. The event made the papers, and a year later Mrs. Prescott asked Charles to come back to



Reverend Jessup (left, with his brother Darrel) used his seaplane to fish for Spanish mackerel as well as for lost souls.

observed that the little tent the Jessups were using was a bit shabby. The next day, Perry and Charles drove south to Sarasota, where the Ringling Brothers circus had its winter headquarters. Charles picked out a tent that he thought would do nicely—a fine, big tent that the circus people used as their commissary. Perry bought the tent and donated it to the ministry that he believed had made him well.

So J. Charles Jessup had his first healing, and his first healing had brought him his first earthly reward. As it happened, the tent proved necessary. A gifts ministry is the one most prized among

eyes and down her cheeks," Jimmie Jessup recalls, and her eyes "cleared up in fifteen minutes and she could see just like an eagle." In Oklahoma City, Charles Jessup was invited to the governor's mansion to pray for the governor's bedridden mother, Mrs. Etta Graham Turner, who was so arthritic that doctors had told her she might never walk again. Jessup prayed for her, and then told her that he was going to leave the room and wait for her outside her door. When she got up and walked, she was so grateful that she insisted upon testifying about her healing through the rest of Jessup's revival. In San Antonio,

San Antonio, where she expressed her gratitude with the gift of a new twelve-cylinder Lincoln Continental.

TENT revivals were a form of cheap entertainment in the time before television, and the revival circuit, known as the "sawdust trail," was intensely competitive. The next healer was always just down the trail, so Jessup developed what amounted to a revival act. Four of his brothers—Jimmie, Byron, Ted, and Darrel—joined him on the road, playing gospel and country-and-Western music. It was in Tupelo, Mississippi, that young Elvis Presle suppos-



"If anyone can balance a career with motherhood and state-sponsored terrorism, it's Jeannie."

edly saw the Jessups and asked if he could travel with them. Darrel told him that the Jessups didn't need another guitar.

Jessup would one day look back at this period of his life, when he was in his twenties and thirties and was preaching under the Ringling tent, and ache for it. He was not then nearly as rich as he would become, or as famous, but his ministry was fresh and vital, his convictions sure; the sensation of looking out over his congregation—their rapt faces asking him to mend their bodies, lift their spirits, and divert them from the wretchedness of their lives—transported him.

In such an emotional religion, a powerful preacher was one who could stir the passions, and not all the passions were spiritual. In the revival culture, Jessup was a star, and the easy availability of women presented a particular temptation, the resistance to which became one of his burdens. Throughout his life, Jessup would privately confide to friends, in that mannered and yet matter-of-fact way of his, that his sexual appetite was close to in-

satiable. When he was eighteen, just as his ministry was taking off, he fell for a girl from Laurel, Mississippi, and in the heat of attraction they quickly married. It almost immediately proved to be a union of the most pronounced incompatibility: the bride was reluctant about sex. After just a few weeks, Jessup sent her home, explaining to her father that she hadn't been a complete wife, but he didn't obtain a divorce; he was loosely affiliated with the Assemblies of God—the predominant Pentecostal denomination, of which his father had been a founding official—and the Assemblies did not countenance divorce. This posed a problem a short time later when, during a revival in Ohio, he met a beautiful young woman from New Orleans and proposed to her. After obtaining a quickie dissolution of his first marriage in Iowa (he liked to call it an annulment), he married his second wife, who soon became pregnant. But this marriage, too, was uncongenial: she hated the strange hours and the insularity of the revival culture, and all those adoring women, and she left.

There was no divorce for this marriage, either, until, in the midst of a spectacularly successful revival in Oklahoma City, in 1940, Charles met Rose Oden. She was just seventeen, a stunningly attractive girl, tall and slim, with big blue eyes. Rose, who was an admired pianist, was in her senior year in high school, where she was excused early every day so that she could play for a local religious radio show. When a friend told her that the Jessup revival needed a pianist, she went to the big tent and agreed to play. Charles walked her home after the service that night, and the next, and on the third evening he asked her to marry him. Rose's mother had attended Jessup's meeting and had been convinced of the young preacher's gifts. (She later sought healing from him for colon cancer, and was more convinced when she saw what she took to be the cancer passed in her stool after he prayed for her.) She urged Rose to accept. Rose's father, however, learned about Jessup's previous marriages, and did not want his daughter getting too close to him—so once again Charles had to hustle up a divorce. (He went to Memphis this time, and fudged a bit by declaring himself a resident of Tennessee.) With the obstacles cleared, Rose and Charles were married, just six weeks after they met. Unlike Charles's first two wives, Rose embraced the revival life style, joining her husband onstage and playing the piano and the accordion. Each night, he beamed as he introduced her as "the Rose of Oklahoma."

Jessup was only twenty-four, successful and about to embark on his greatest revival yet, in Tulsa. There, legend has it, a young pastor named Oral Roberts witnessed the Jessup phenomenon and decided that his own destiny was in the mass-healing revival. But controversy had already become a companion of Jessup's ministry. His marriages scandalized the Assemblies of God, which would not certify him. A brief run with the Baptists ended when Jessup, concluding that he couldn't live on his salary, supplemented his income by holding a few independent revivals—a breach he said was called "alienation of pulpit affection." His true gift for soliciting money swelled the collection plates but deeply annoyed local churches and merchants: they noticed a decline in cash flow whenever Jessup

was in town, and they encouraged his early departure by pressuring local authorities to revoke his meeting permit.

Jessup's most steadfast nemesis, however, was a group called the Church of Christ, a fundamentalist Protestant sect whose teachings deemed the cardinal tenets of Pentecostalism—signs and wonders and miracles in the present day—pure heresy. The church, whose members were mostly working-class Southerners—the same flock the Pentecostals wooed—taught that all faith healing was fraudulent and that Jessup, with his flamboyance and his success, was particularly fraudulent. Many Church of Christ members brought persistence and personal initiative to their enmity. Some took it upon themselves to run large newspaper ads in every major town on Jessup's revival tour, challenging the miracle theology and offering a thousand dollars to anyone who could prove the occurrence of a miracle healing. Once, when Jessup was holding a revival in Kentucky, the Church of Christ hired a pilot to drop thousands of anti-healing leaflets over Jessup's tent.

THE two great pitfalls that stand between a powerful preacher and lasting greatness are money and sex, and the money pitfall presented itself to Jessup one night in 1942, while he was listening to the radio. He was holding a revival in Oklahoma City, and after the service he tuned in to a station that called itself "XERF, Del Rio, Texas, 1570 on your dial." It was actually a tiny radio station in Ciudad Acuña, Mexico, just across the border from Del Rio. It became a kind of legend in broadcasting, because its transmitter, beyond the reach of United States broadcasting authorities, produced a signal that was five times more powerful than the legal limit and, at times, could be heard all the way from Argentina to Canada (and even, with the right atmospheric bounce, parts of Finland and the Soviet Union), and throughout many areas of the United States. It went on the air only in the eve-

nings, when it reached millions of listeners, and played mostly country tunes. Jessup made his way to Del Rio, where the station's business offices were, and after paying nine hundred dollars for a month's airtime he prepared for his shot at broadcasting.

Charles and Jimmie rented a recording studio in Oklahoma City, and from there Jimmie introduced "the most preachable preacher that ever preached preachable preaching"; Rose played the Jessup theme song, "Look Away to Heaven"; and Charles launched into one of his sermons, managing to achieve in that empty rented studio the volume and ferocity of his revival performances. He recorded a month's worth of broadcasts on fifteen-inch disks, sent them off to Del Rio, and awaited the results. He was a hit. The production values were low (in one broadcast, he demonstrated a healing by thumping a jar of gallstones against the mike), but the Jessup style came through, and connected with what proved to be an astonishingly large audience.

Radio presented an unexpected dilemma, though. Jessup's broadcast message, like the message in the revivals, was keyed to his miraculous Prayer of Faith. In a revival, he would lay hands on each individual who answered the call, and on the radio he promised to do the same with their letters. "I want you to know that I believe in my heart I can pray for you. No matter what is wrong

with you, God can heal you," Jessup said at the end of a typical broadcast. "Now, I'll be fastin' and prayin' when your letter gets to me. I will pray for you individually, calling out your name to God in prayer, and believing God for your healing." The volume of response was overwhelming—at one point, it reached four thousand letters a day. Jessup's compromise was to pray over some of the letters individually and over others collectively, in stacks. Nearly all his correspondents would have been surprised at that. The letters Jessup received were poignantly personal, as if they had been written to a lifelong friend. "I am sending you the little piece of wart that fell off my shoulders," Blanche Brooks, of Duncan, Oklahoma, wrote. She added that she had been doing some gardening, and lamented that her sister had been seeing a doctor "instead of having her preacher pray for her." Blanche Brooks concluded, "I know you have prayed time and again for my health and I am giving God the Glory for it."

Most of the letters were accompanied by an offering, in response to Jessup's closing message in each broadcast: he requested a "donation" to help pay for the "faith broadcast" and for office workers.

He hired a clerical staff, bought a printing machine and a stamp machine, as well as the latest address plates for personalizing correspondence. He developed a systematized mailing list, breaking the names into active and



"Hello? Risotto-crisis hot line?"

inactive files, which were determined by how recently a correspondent had written. Each month, listeners who had written in would receive a "personal" letter from Jessup, along with an invitation to write again, and to be sure to include their prayer requests and a faith donation. What Jessup created, in other words, was a potent direct-mail solicitation operation to bolster his broadcast pleas. It would become, in the words of one federal agent, "a very sophisticated mail operation," which "would have been the envy of a big corporation." But Jessup was not exactly a corporate thinker, and what he did not design into his mail operation was an equally sophisticated method of accounting; he instructed the women in the office to write out on the back of the envelope the amount of the donation sent in each letter. It would later be observed that since so many of the donations were in cash this system made it almost impossible to challenge Jessup's accounting.

The money allowed Charles to start thinking about settling into a permanent home, and he knew just the place he wanted to buy. When he was a boy

in Gulfport, longing to preach, and practicing on street corners, he would sometimes go down to the Confederate Veterans' home in Jeff Davis's place, Beauvoir, and preach to the old soldiers and widow ladies there. It happened that the house adjacent to it, just across a little road facing the beach, was for sale. The price was steep for 1943—more than twenty thousand dollars, enough money to pay for two years' broadcast time—but the radio donations were pouring in, and, besides, the place could serve as the headquarters of Charles's entire ministry. Without telling Rose, he bought the house and presented it to her as a fait accompli. Then he set up the radio headquarters in several small cottages behind the house.

THE success of Jessup's Del Rio broadcasts inspired him to buy time on a second Mexican superstation, XEG, in Monterrey, which called itself "the Voice of North America." Now he was heard twelve times a week from the powerful border stations, and eventually he added stations in New York and Chicago, which made his coverage of

the United States nearly complete. Scores of preachers were vying for a niche on the airwaves, but among them Jessup's voice was distinct; to encounter it while scanning the radio dial was an arresting experience even for a casual listener. At full throttle and breaking only for those loud gasps of breath, Jessup lent the King James Version a sort of run-on South Mississippi particularity: "The Bible says, 'If there be any sick among you let them call for the elders of the church, [gasp] and let them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord, [gasp] and the Prayer of Faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise them up,' not 'Maybe so,' or 'Hope so,' or 'Probably will,' or 'Maybe it's gonna be that way, keep trustin' the Lord.' *Nonsense!* That's all full of diabolical superciliousity! [gasp] I wanna tell you right now if the Prayer of Faith is *prayed*, [gasp] God bless your soul, *you're gonna get saved and healed and raised up!*" And then, gearing down to a soft, teary plea, Jessup would lean into the microphone and vow, "Down on my bended knees, with your open letter in my hand, tears rollin' down my cheeks, I'll plead with God the Prayer of Faith, and you will get results. Whoa, friends, listen! I don't care what your troubles are, the Bible says, 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' Let me pray for you, won't you? Won't you sit down and write me a letter now? Don't put it off, you may put it off too long. . . . Write me a letter, to J. Charles Jessup, Gulfport, Mississippi. With your letter of request, if at all possible, let the Holy Spirit lead you, but send an offering to help pay for our radio time. I'll pray for you."

With his focus on the radio work, there was less need for the Jessup brothers to function as a standing unit, so the act was effectively over. Beginning in the nineteen-fifties, Charles built a new circle around him, which included a hard-drinking, hard-living local musician named Murphy (Pee Wee) Maddux. Pee Wee was a well-regarded songwriter and fiddler on the New Orleans-to-Biloxi honky-tonk circuit, and he was playing at Sie Simon's night club, in Biloxi, when he attended a revival under the big tent over at the Jessup place and was healed of a chronic stomach condition. The incident inspired in Pee Wee a devotion to Jessup which was instant and

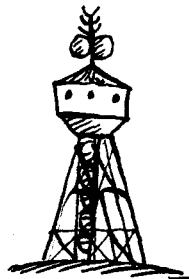


"How is it gendered?"

complete, and he left Sie Simon's to become Jessup's right-hand man: he travelled with Jessup, anticipated his needs, and performed all manner of chores. His background in music gave him an expertise in the recording studio, and he helped Jessup set up a studio in the house, where Rose played the piano and Charles preached. With Pee Wee's help, Jessup became more creative in his radio pitch, developing, among other things, a personalized prayer record, which the faithful received for a special donation and allowed them to hear a personalized message from Brother Charles in their own homes; Jessup recorded one message on a master and then read the names of the individual recipients, which Pee Wee recorded and inserted in each individual disk. The response to such efforts pleased and surprised Pee Wee: he was glad to be part of the success. "I could tell you this, he averaged anywhere from ten to fourteen thousand dollars a month contributions in the mail," Pee Wee told me years later. "We'd count the money, and I would deposit it for him."

Fourteen thousand dollars a month was a huge amount of money in the late fifties and early sixties, and Jessup was still a vital man. As a boy, he had known the discomfort and the struggle that God's mission could bring, and now he was amenable to enjoying a few of the comforts. He loved to fish, and to fly, which inspired his purchase of a boat and a succession of seaplanes, and that gift of a twelve-cylinder Lincoln had accustomed him to luxury cars, which he could now buy for himself. He thought, too, of doing something grandly beneficent with part of the money, but the plan he conceived didn't bring the desired result. His idea was to create a Faith Hospital, as he called it—a place where Christians could come for healing and fellowship under his personal direction. But, while Jessup flogged the Faith Hospital on his radio broadcasts, all he did was to hire one nurse and rent out the old H & H Hotel, in downtown Gulfport, and the construction of the hospital never progressed much beyond an artist's rendering he mailed to listeners who donated to the cause. For years, stories were heard along the coast about people getting off the bus in Gulfport and asking for the Faith Hospital, only to be told that the enterprise was not yet quite operational.

The government would later guess that Jessup brought in about ten million dollars from his radio operation, but even Jessup probably couldn't have given an accurate figure. The broadcasts kept going out and the mail kept coming back, and eventually Jessup's "system" devolved to the practice of his staff's opening the envelopes, removing the money, and slipping it into a slit on the lid of a large trash can: the lid had a lock on it, and Charles had the key. It was all slipshod and dangerous, but Jessup didn't see that. After all, he took only seventy-five dollars a week in actual salary from his Fellowship Revival Association, and, as for the boat and the planes and the cars and the big home, he later told me, "That was just transportation and a place to stay."



IN the nineteen-forties and fifties, the Mississippi coast that Jessup so dearly loved was at once a strikingly genteel and an openly corrupt place. A drive along Highway 90, the beach road, led visitors past gracious antebellum homes and historical landmarks but eventually took them into the tawdry little meccas of the coast's night life—places with names like the Peacock Club and the Five O'Clock Club, where drink and sex and gambling of every sort, from blackjack to Beat My Shake, were readily available. Gambling was illegal, but payoffs to the authorities were part of the local rhythm. With the respectable establishment Jessup had only a faint acquaintance; a prominent lawyer or doctor would see Jessup as a figure of curiosity—the evangelist with the seaplane and the big tent that was used each year in Gulfport's fishing rodeo. By caste and by inclination, Jessup belonged to that other world on the coast: the world of hustlers and gamblers.

Jessup enjoyed a fine cigar and rowdy music, and, of course, he had a passion for game fowl, which brought him into contact with people of a sort usually outside a minister's social circle. One of his close acquaintances was a man named Harry Bennett, a prominent gambler and club owner who had once worked with Al Capone and was known on the coast as an associate of the New Orleans Mob boss Carlos Marcello. Jessup and Bennett first met, in the late nineteen-

forties, as opponents at a thousand-dollar cockfight "main"—a series of fights in which each side puts in a certain number of roosters and the owner with the most wins takes the prize money. Bennett's preferred breed was the gray, and Jessup was known for his Murphy reds, which were particularly fierce and durable birds. Before the fight, Bennett told Jessup that no matter who won he'd like the two of them to become friends. "Well, since you feel that way about it," Jessup replied, "why, instead of just fightin' for a thousand, let's put up another thousand." Bennett agreed, and, after Jessup's birds won, the two became close friends.

The gambler would often stop by the preacher's place in the morning for what Jessup called "some fellowshipping." On one of those mornings, Bennett returned to his own home after breakfast, opened the door of his new Cadillac, and was greeted by an executioner, who fired seven .32-calibre bullets into his head and left the ace of spades in the car as a calling card. "That's the kind of company Charles would keep," Robert Bennett, Harry's son, says, and he adds that Jessup was a fixture on the scene when he was growing up.

Jessup's parents and Rose were mortified by Charles's seedy "hobby," and also by his brazen openness about it. "People would drive up to see Reverend Jessup," Rose recalls, "and there were those game chickens in back. Oh! It was terrible!" But Jessup seemed almost addicted to the sport. There were times when he tried to quit cockfighting, but without success. For a man like Jessup—one so intensely driven that he stared down God, and flew a seaplane in order to reach fish more quickly—part of the allure of cockfighting was that it fed his need for action. He loved training the birds, readying them for a fight, but his thrill came during the matches, which could last several hours; wagering was carried on throughout the fight, and the odds changed constantly as one bird or the other gained an advantage. Once, at a match in Hot Springs, Arkansas, Jessup got so caught up in the action that he bet huge sums against his own birds, and when they won he lost.

Still, the money came easily to Jessup. Raising it was his special art, and

he knew it, and knowing it perhaps made it inevitable that money would become the main point of all he did. By the early sixties, his broadcasts were increasingly keyed to gimmicks, like a trip to the Holy Land, where he fasted in a tent in the Garden of Gethsemane. He brought back souvenirs: small vials of water and sand from the Holy Land, which he sent to his special contributors. (A federal agent later remarked that "what he was selling looked an awful lot like that sand down there in front of his house on the beach.") The money came like Biblical rain. "People loved to give that man money, for some reason," Pee Wee told me thirty years later, still with a measure of awe in his voice.

To many of the people who knew Jessup but were not familiar with the powerful mysteries of his faith, there was only one conclusion to be made about the man, and it was simply put by Robert Bennett, the gambler's son: "The preacher was a gamblin' man, he was a fraud. Charles was a fraud." Jessup himself was not unaware of appearances, but he kept a kind of inner ledger that served as his rationale. On one side were his earthly impulses, on the other was his gift. He had, he told himself, saved thousands of souls, healed hundreds of bodies; he had been generous, always an easy touch for other ministers, and countless times during his revivals he had announced that anyone who was in need should take something out of the offering plate. In self-judgment, Jessup was no more harsh than most men, and perhaps even less so, because of that license from God, which was, he concluded, irrevocable. It said so in the Bible, in Paul's Letter to the Romans: "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." That was the perfect rationale for an aggressively imperfect life—a divine endorsement of abominable behavior. But, if his faith was real, where was the fraud?

MATTERS of theology have carried little weight with the United States government, and Jessup's lucrative radio ministry made him a natural target for tax investigation. But the Internal Revenue Service failed in three investigations to find proof of criminal concealment of income. Jessup's records, such as they were, checked out, but since so much of his listeners' donations con-

sisted of small amounts of cash, there was no way of knowing how much Jessup might not have reported. In Jessup's opinion, it was church money, and he had ways of protecting it. On at least one occasion, he stuffed several thousand dollars in small bills (a government agent put the figure at fifty thousand dollars) inside the upholstery of his automobile, sewed up the car seat with a needle and thread, then drove with Pee Wee Maddux to Monterrey and deposited the money in a Mexican bank. "I was afraid the government was going to sue me here, you know," Jessup explained to me during one of my Mississippi visits. "I'd heard talk about it, and I didn't want them takin' this money away from us. It was Fellowship Revival Association money anyway, you know."

Nevertheless, Jessup did not escape a determined investigation that came from a source he did not expect—the United States Postal Inspection Office, in Washington. The postal inspectors, a less well-known federal police force than the F.B.I. or the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, were charged with investigating criminal use of the mails, and in 1962 the office's Medical Fraud Unit opened an investigation into the Mexican border stations that transmitted Jessup's broadcasts. The two agents who took the case—Charles Miller, who was based in Washington, and Oris Whitley, a no-nonsense career postal employee from Arkansas—monitored Jessup's broadcasts with the help of the Federal Communications Commission. After the first week of listening in, Miller, an Episcopalian, and Whitley, a Baptist, decided that Jessup's message was a well-acted con. "We concluded that Jessup was right on borderline grounds [of fraud], and, of course, we didn't believe what he was preaching," Whitley recalls. "But, on the other hand, you can't convict somebody of fraud on religious beliefs."

Miller and Whitley went to work, keeping Jessup's operation under near-constant surveillance. Charles and Rose began to feel as if they were being hunted, which, in a way, they were. When Jessup sought refuge on his beloved Chandeaur Island, Whitley requisitioned a Coast Guard airplane and personally conducted a close flyby—the incident Jessup later characterized as an attempt on his life. The agent was not convinced that Jessup's excursion was

strictly spiritual. "There he was, his tent and his boat out there, and when we flew by, he was over by his boat," Whitley said. "You know, Chandeaur Island is known as a great fishing place." The agents were relentless. Whitley found Jessup's former wives, living in Illinois and in Texas, and interviewed them; he learned all about Jessup's friendship with Harry Bennett, and about the cockfighting.

The investigation drove Rose to near distraction, and deepened fissures in the marriage which had been building for years. Although she ran the office, Charles had never fully revealed his business to her, and she had accepted that. Charles was outwardly as cheerful and easygoing as ever, but he spent an increasing amount of time on the road. When he came home, he and Rose had fights, and the fights would cause him to leave again. Rose calculated that in 1962, the period of Whitley and Miller's most intense scrutiny, Charles was gone for more than half the year. He spent most of his time in Mexico, doing missionary work and tending to his broadcasts, he said, though Rose grilled him about lipstick on his shirts and other signs of betrayal. Then, one day when Charles was out of town, Pee Wee Maddux came to the house and delivered some papers to Rose. They were written in Spanish, and when Rose had them translated she discovered that Charles

MORE GEMS

Although the British playwright Pam Gems's most recent import to the States was about a man (the critically acclaimed "Stanley," inspired by the eccentric life of the painter Stanley Spencer), she has built her career writing about women—specifically, the stories behind mythic women, real and imagined: "Camille," "Piaf," which was a Broadway hit in 1981, "Guinevere," "Queen Christina." Her latest, "Marlene," a play with music, starring the British actress Siân Phillips, opens this week at the Cort. The show is set in Paris in 1969, during a farewell concert tour, and word has it that Phillips's performance (need we say as Dietrich?) is just as uncanny as her cool countenance in conjuring the late legend.

Photograph by Max Vadukul



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was divorcing her for incompatibility. Rose became hysterical and refused to leave until Charles confronted her himself, and he did so the next day. He later told me that the government's "persecution" had ruined the marriage and that he had obtained a Mexican divorce to avoid publicity. Rose returned home to Oklahoma. Soon afterward, Charles married Nita Uribe, his fourth wife.

UNTIL that moment of crisis for J. Charles Jessup, he had been to me just a distant, if elevated, figure in what seemed to a child's eyes a rather exotic cast of adult characters. Of God's earthen vessels I had seen much, my mother being the third-generation representative of a line of women evangelists. Her grandmother Amanda Capps, who was the daughter of a respectable Methodist minister, had seen Jesus in a vision during a traumatic childbirth, whereupon she'd induced her husband to sell the family farm and set out across the South and the Southwest to preach the Gospel and to save souls. Mother Capps, as she was known, travelled with four of her six daughters, including my mother's mother, Nova, who was given to having visions and was later said to have had the gift of prophecy. Nova died of consumption when my mother, Paula, was four (the death was revealed to Nova in a dream), and the girl was in the care of her aunts. The travelling female band was not surprised when my mother received her own dramatic calling to the pulpit, at the age of twelve, nor was it surprised, in that age of Aimée Semple McPherson, by the success that followed. By the time Mother was sixteen, she had preached in tabernacles, tents, and auditoriums from Pensacola to Portland, and had spoken at the Cotton Bowl. It was in that year, 1940, that she first heard of J. Charles Jessup, through an excited long-distance telephone call from a girlfriend of hers in Oklahoma City—Rose Oden, who said she planned to marry a fiery young preacher from Mississippi.

When Rose subsequently introduced Mother to Charles, the two of them became fast friends, bound by their common experience of having been compelled from childhood to preach. Through the years, each leaned upon the other as a source of unquestioning support. My mother eventually

WE WALKED OUT OF THE HOSPITAL

on a mild early evening
in mid-December,
the air barely dark, the winter
still lagging behind the oak leaves . . .
and we held her up to the sky
(a fountain buoying a bubble).
My husband bought fifteen containers of Middle Eastern food
then we holed up—the house
a flea market of disorganization, the phone
ringing even in dreams
again
awake and asleep so often I
checked for my glasses before hitting the pillow . . .
It soon became a winter of snow
and record cold
for which, nearly alone, I was grateful:
each of us layered as if for a fall
hoisting a handful of shirt
like an Elizabethan . . .
Often, I thought the wind woke me
to the sheet
blankets
my husband's new body
shutters chattering like teeth . . .
Then the evening's wide expanse
narrowed to a cry
noble in its isolation
and reached me as though I had been waiting
when truly she woke me
(to all the rooms and all the bodies).

met my father, a butcher, and settled in Los Angeles to rear her family, but her calling never left her. Through one stretch of my childhood, she preached on Sunday afternoons at the Embassy Auditorium, in downtown Los Angeles, and on one of those occasions, to my delight, she gave an illustrated sermon about John the Baptist which featured a mock severed head on a silver platter. Later, for a time, she had her own church, a storefront in Inglewood. Jessup's appearances in those days were irregular but memorable—once, he pitched a tent from the Holy Land on the stage of the Embassy Auditorium, forgoing any pay until the final day of his weeklong revival, when he cleaned up in one giant mega-offering.

Then, one day in 1964, when I was twelve, my mother suddenly announced that we were moving. My sister and I were told that Daddy had had enough of the meat business and had decided to become, of all things, a travelling salesman, peddling a line of ladies' knitwear. Our new home would be the Mississippi coast. It was not until I was in middle age that my mother revealed to me the real reason we had moved to Mississippi—she'd received a telephone call from Charles. Hounded by federal agents, distracted by his messy breakup with Rose, Jessup had seen his ministry disintegrating, and he had neither the will nor, by then, the credibility to save it on his own. So my mother moved us to the South, and there she assumed the daily operation and bookkeeping of a broadcast ministry that was at that moment the object of a determined investigation by the fraud unit of the United States Postal Service. "I be-



So I stepped into my suit—
 laid out in the dark for that moment—
 an outsize flannel print of cows
 and we took our places
 by the curtainless window
 the imperfect chair, the unfinished room
 inadvertently respectful of newness
 and the sky's
 inspection.
 O mentholated moon
 we are still on our own down here
 lucky and...
 Poor
 poor archivists
 we committed to memory
 the slogan of the brake
 shop down the block
 but lost the impress
 of what was far more loved
 and truly stopped us in our tracks.
 One Thursday
 stuffed, suddenly, with heat
 winter ended like a long meal
 the baby looked us in the eye
 spring trees appeared like mist
 around the edges of the park
 and the time of timelessness was over.

—JESSICA GREENBAUM

lieved, and I still believe, that Charles was sincere," my mother told me. "And he needed help."

As the name of Whitley and Miller's Medical Fraud Unit implied, their aim was to expose Jessup's Prayer of Faith as a form of medical quackery, but faith proved a slippery hunting ground for them. They interviewed people who Jessup claimed had been healed by his prayers, and, to the agents' amazement, these people's belief was complete. "Their story is that 'he healed me,' but still the people are walkin' around on crutches and they can hardly negotiate," Whitley recalls. "We couldn't touch that, although I didn't believe it." The investigators also looked into the possibility that Jessup had employed shills to promote his healings, but they couldn't find any evidence of that, either. Persisting, the agents found a plan that finally proved fruitful. Listening carefully to

their tapes of Jessup's broadcasts, Miller and Whitley discovered that Jessup regularly promised to pray for his listeners' needs individually. If he was receiving hundreds of letters a day from a mailing list of sixty thousand, how could he possibly pray for each person individually? They noted, too, that Jessup had asked for donations to help keep him on the air, even though the agents knew that he'd paid for his radio time for several years in advance and that he had several thousand dollars in the bank in any case. If Jessup was making promises he didn't intend to keep, or soliciting money on false grounds, and, through his mailings, using the United States Postal Service to effect these deeds, that could be construed as mail fraud. Their case was thin, and based on a technicality, but the inspectors prepared to present it to the Justice Department. At first, they couldn't find a willing prosecutor. The United States Attorney in Jackson had political

ambitions, and sending a popular radio preacher to jail was not a prospect that he embraced.

Robert F. Kennedy, the Attorney General, had appointed a man named James F. Neal as United States Attorney in Nashville, Tennessee. Neal, a tough, ambitious ex-marine, who later acted as chief Watergate trial counsel, sending John Mitchell, John Ehrlichman, and H. R. Haldeman to jail, never shied from a fight. When I spoke with him, thirty years later, his indignation came through: "These outrageous mailings of J. Charles Jessup walkin' across this rainbow hand in hand with Jesus Christ, and his prayers for these people, where he'd dub in the names and all—just outrageous! And I got into it... and the fighting cocks and the seaplanes and all of this, and so I said, 'Well, by God, this man is outrageous. I'll indict him for you.' I was incensed by what he was doing. I thought, Well, if I'm wrong, some judge can tell me I'm wrong, but I'm going to go ahead and do it."

Jim Neal got his indictment—eleven counts of mail fraud against Jessup, Rose, and Pee Wee Maddux—which was handed down two days before Thanksgiving in 1964. The thrust of the indictment focussed on the fact that Jessup claimed to be a man of God but didn't live like one. The document recounted in detail some of the more bizarre-seeming claims of Jessup's, including his rainbow walk with Jesus and his contention that he had been given powerful gifts from God, and then it enunciated his personal failings: his four marriages, an alleged affair with a teenage girl, the cockfighting, and the seaplane, the boat, the luxury automobiles, and the house next to Beauvoir. Although the charges were mail fraud, and not tax evasion, the indictment noted Jessup's accounting system, in which he alone dealt with the cash donations, "so that currency was seldom deposited." More to the point in the matter of mail fraud, the indictment charged that Jessup promised to pray individually for his followers but did not, and that the mailings and recorded prayers they received were in fact mass-produced; that the Faith Hospital wasn't all that Jessup said it was; that Jessup exaggerated the accounts he gave of his prayer vigil in the Garden of Gethsemane; and that his plea for funds in order to stay on the air

was unnecessary, since he had already paid the station in advance. The specific counts of the indictment cited eleven mailings of Jessup's standard materials to four of his followers in the Nashville area, which gave Neal and the Nashville grand jury jurisdiction. There was, for example, one Ora Martin, a Jessup listener, who regularly received his mailings, and who apparently made a two-dollar donation in return for a personal benediction.

Jessup was arrested at his home and was released on a hundred thousand dollars' bail. To defend him, he turned to a high-priced Denver lawyer named Francis R. Salazar, a self-proclaimed atheist, who had made something of a specialty out of defending preachers against fraud charges and had never lost a case. Salazar saw weaknesses in the indictment against Jessup, which led him to believe that it was a clear-cut case of religious persecution. Then, in preparing Jessup's defense, he made a discovery that he hoped would insure Jessup's triumph. Nashville had been chosen for the indictment because that was where the willing prosecutor, Jim Neal, was, but the city was also effectively the national headquarters of the Church of Christ, Jessup's lifelong enemy. Through private investigators hired by Jessup, Salazar learned that eight members of the grand jury indicting Jessup belonged to the Church of Christ. To Salazar, it was a stunning realization: half the

members of the grand jury charging Jessup with fraud believed as a matter of personal faith that any claim of miraculous healing was on its face a fraud.

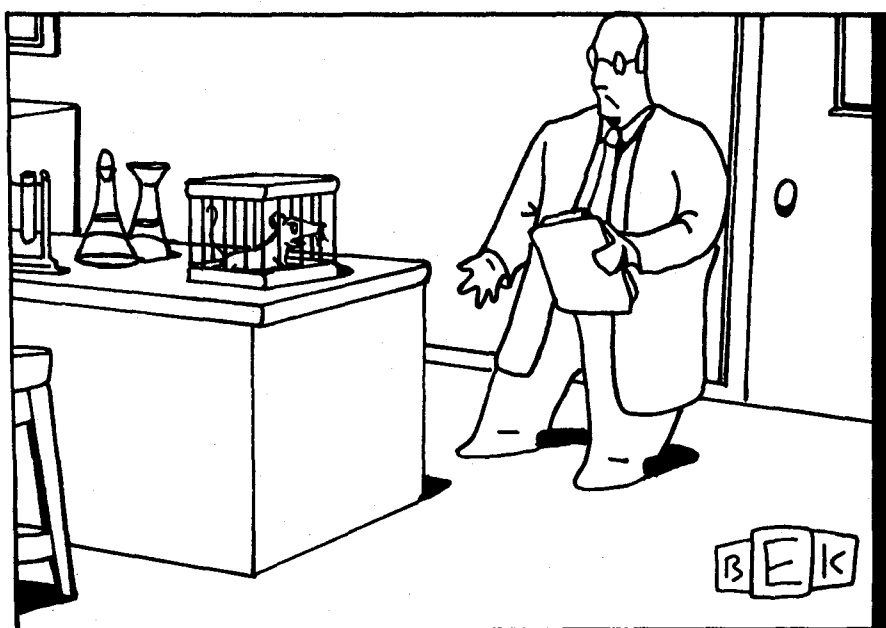
The development suggested to Salazar an irresistible defense strategy: he would construct a case that would effectively put God's healing power on trial. He imagined the witnesses he would bring: "a parade of people who were healed," he says. "And he had a lot of them, by the way." That was a prospect that not only would enhance Jessup's chances before a Bible Belt jury but promised a courtroom spectacle such as hadn't been seen since another Tennessee test of God—the 1925 Scopes trial.

Jessup, however, was desperate to escape the influence of the Church of Christ, and he insisted on attempting a change of venue from Tennessee to Mississippi. In the summer of 1965, Salazar won a transfer of the case to Biloxi, where he was sure he would win Jessup's acquittal. But Jessup was convinced that there needn't be a trial—he believed that now that he was home in Mississippi the whole nasty business could be taken care of politically, by his friends. He politely dismissed Salazar and hired a team of local lawyers on the coast, headed by Bidwell Adam, a former Mississippi lieutenant governor, and for two years the case slogged through a long series of motions and hearings.

But Jessup's fate was not merely his own; there were damaged lives all

around him, and none was more ruined than that of his former wife, Rose. After Charles unilaterally dissolved their twenty-two-year marriage and threw her out of their home in Gulfport, Rose's family collected her and brought her home to Oklahoma City, a near wreck. She found herself unable to attend church, much less play the organ during services, and she was obliged to seek psychiatric therapy. Eventually, she was able to go to work, taking a job as a secretary at the General Electric plant. On Thanksgiving Eve of 1964, she was called from her desk, and she, too, was arrested. After having her taken into custody, Oris Whitley rode with Rose in a taxi to the local courthouse while she sat silently, staring ahead. "I thought maybe she'd talk to me, but she wouldn't even speak," Whitley recalled. "She was so mad at me, boy, if I'd a been a nail, she coulda bit through me." But Whitley had it wrong. Rose wasn't angry—she was simply terrified. She posted bail, and she hired a family friend, O. A. Cargill, Sr., as her attorney. Rose and Cargill travelled to Nashville for a hearing, and years later she recalled shaking with fear as she entered the courtroom. But the case itself was not the only source of her dread; she feared the effect of once again being in the presence of Charles. She had been praying, begging God, she said, to take the love for Charles out of her heart. "Then when I saw Charles, he didn't look at me," she recalled. "He was just lookin' down. And, somehow, I don't know why, but I said, 'O.A., that's not the man I loved.' He looked different to me." It was answered prayer. "And I quit shakin' from that day." Cargill won a severance of Rose's case from Jessup's, and the charges against her were eventually dismissed.

Much of the clerical staff had been scared off by the investigation. That left Charles and Pee Wee—and, as I later learned, my mother—to carry on more or less alone. Charles would disappear into the house for hours while Mother handled the mail and Pee Wee took care of the broadcasts and, as usual, the special projects. In 1967, three years after the indictment, Pee Wee's father asked him why he was putting himself through such an ordeal for the preacher, since he'd only been Jessup's water boy, and the more Pee Wee thought about it the more he was inclined to agree. Loy-



"Do you even know how long it's been since you last poked and prodded me?"

alty was one thing, but mail fraud was prison, so Pee Wee took his father's advice and hired his own lawyer—Robert Bennett, the son of Jessup's old gambling pal. Bennett met with the prosecutors and came away with a deal for Pee Wee: if he would quit Jessup's operation and turn state's evidence, the government would recommend dismissal of his case. "He went for it like a green trout, *quick-quick*," Bennett says. "He did not want to go to jail." Pee Wee was haunted by his decision for years, and, although he didn't give the government any information it didn't already have, he knew that Jessup would never forgive him. "I still think a lot of him," Pee Wee told me sadly, years later, "and knowing Charles like I do, I know his psyche. If he thinks somebody's done him wrong—boy, he's through. That's it."

Jessup was devastated by Pee Wee's betrayal—"I treated him like a brother," he said. "I baptized him in the River Jordan, in a *foreign country*"—but he still maintained the hope that he himself would be cleared. Then, in March, 1968, there was a breakthrough. Jessup's lawyers reached an agreement with the government whereby Jessup would plead *nolo contendere* to two of the charges—sending two mailings to Ora Martin, of Waverly, Tennessee—and the other charges would be dropped. Salazar, even though he no longer represented Jessup, implored him not to make a deal, reasoning that if Jessup went to trial and lost he could always maintain that he had been wrongly convicted, whereas a plea of no contest implied guilt and would ruin his ministry. But what Jessup wanted above all was to stay out of jail; as a preacher, he had seen his share of prisons, and he didn't want to know what the other side of the bars looked like. Jessup expected a "trivial fine" and an admonition from the court to refrain from controversial activities, and he thought he would almost certainly avoid jail.

Jessup took their advice and entered the no-contest plea before District Judge Dan Russell, Jr., and Russell deferred disposition of the case for several



"Once more unto the breach, and that's it for me."

months while presentencing reports were prepared. During these months, Jessup's lawyers and friends went to work, and Jessup was optimistic. Bidwell Adam, as a former lieutenant governor, had a certain influence in most courtrooms, and he had been a lawyer under Judge Russell's father when he was a judge. Even more promising was the lobbying of another Jessup admirer, a wealthy and powerful Natchez oilman named D. A. Biglane. Mr. Biglane, as he was called by everybody, had a soft spot for the preacher, and he developed one for Dan Russell, too, bringing him in as a partner in one of his oil wells. (That business deal, the Judge later told me, made the transition from his lucrative law practice to the bench much easier.) Dozens of other local people, including politicians who had been fishing with Jessup or had received a contribution from him, fellow-preachers, and worshippers who believed they had been healed, got in touch with Russell, too. My mother developed a friendship with the Judge which endures still.

Dan Russell was a man of stubborn convictions. He had personally drawn the plans that desegregated much of

Mississippi's school system, and had taken much heat for his effort. As a boy growing up on the coast, Russell had seen Jessup standing on the street corners preaching his weird religion in fanatical ways. Then, when he was a young man working his way through school as a drugstore soda jerk, he had once seen Jessup collecting his bags of mail at the post office and going through his letters in a way that looked very much as if he were taking out the money and junking the prayer requests. Later on, as a lawyer, Russell had often seen Jessup taking off in his seaplane, and he knew about the place next to Beauvoir, and there was just something about the whole setup that stuck in his craw. Years later, discussing the Jessup case with me, Russell remembered that during one visit to his friend Ben Keyes, a car dealer who sold the Judge new Cadillacs every year, the subject of Jessup came up: "Ben said, 'Daniel, Jessup was in here and bought a Cadillac convertible today, with leopard-skin lining. You ought to get you one of those.' I said, 'Hell, I can't afford one of those. Did you furnish the women?' He said, 'Didn't need to. He can handle that.'"

Like Oris Whitley and Jim Neal, Dan Russell came to see J. Charles Jessup as a charlatan, and the fate of the preacher, despite all the interventions from his friends, was sealed from the moment he walked into Russell's court to enter that no-contest plea. "I had my mind made up," Russell says. "He was going to serve some time."

On December 18, 1968, Jessup returned to Judge Russell's court, in Biloxi, for what he felt certain was his long-awaited moment of release. Two of his lawyers asked the Judge for mercy, citing the preacher's good works and the fact that three I.R.S. investigations had found no tax crimes. When they finished, Russell began to speak, and, addressing Jessup directly, made his feelings clear. He said he was sure that Jessup appreciated his lawyers' fine remarks, but then he reminded everyone that "the mail is what has gotten him into trouble." The Judge noted that Jessup used his nonprofit status to send out letters at a reduced rate—mailings that declared him to be a man of God. "And here's his bank, right there," Russell said, indicating the metal can with the slit in its lid, which had been brought into court. "A big galvanized tin can with a hole in the top, that he has entrance to and nobody else. And where the money goes from there I don't think the United States knows, or anyone else." Russell spoke of "the number of Cadillacs, airplanes, and boats that he has," paid for by "the money of these people that [he] has written to and begged and pleaded for money for this cause."

With unveiled disdain, the Judge continued, "Instead of praying for the multitudes, he preyed on the multitudes." (Jessup later told me he would always remember how Russell looked as he spoke these words, and he swore that the Judge was actually foaming at the mouth.) Then Russell sprang a surprise on Jessup and his attorneys. He reminded the preacher that when he entered his plea he had promised to cease and desist from the mailings. But the postal service had been monitoring Jessup's mail, and Russell pulled out a stack of letters that Jessup had sent since entering his plea, and read some of them before the court. "Tears are running down my face as I write to you," Russell read in mocking tones, and, from another letter, "Oh, just

think! God sent forth prophecy to you."

The Judge went on to say, "Now, that is the stuff he has been sending out each month since he appeared before me before, which seems to indicate what this man will say or do and use people and religion as a pawn to get money for his cause, whatever it might be. I can't think of a more dastardly act. I just can't conceive of it." And then, looking Jessup in the eye, he pronounced sentence: guilty on both counts, with a term in prison of one year, which could become five years if Jessup violated his probation by resuming his mailings. When Jessup heard the sentence, he fainted dead away, and at first Russell thought that it was an act. Then, seeing that the preacher really had passed out, the Judge ordered Jessup's attorneys to put their client in a chair until he had finished reading the sentence.

In March, 1969, Jessup left his home on the beach for the last time, and surrendered to the United States Marshal in Biloxi, who escorted him to the federal prison in Texarkana, Texas.

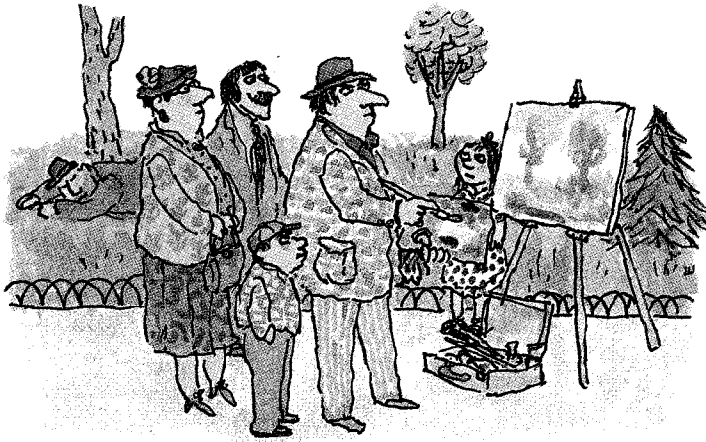
I was sixteen then, and had long since become preoccupied with girlfriends and football and college plans, but I heard about Reverend Jessup's being sent away. Even though he had always been the most notorious man I knew, I couldn't quite imagine him in prison, and the thought of it, I admit, made me sad. My mind's eye saw him at the controls of that seaplane, grinning as he swooped down at a school of redfish; or at home at the Jessup place on a rainy Saturday, wearing his "relaxed clothes"—jeans and a flannel shirt—and serving up soft-shell crabs. Would he survive prison? A friend of Jessup's, the wife of a preacher, later told me that she had visited Jessup in prison. "He was so pitiful," she said. "He had always had nice things, and all. And, just to see him there, I couldn't hardly stand it. . . . He had on that junk that they put you in, no pretty shoes or anything. And I just wept."

The summer that Jessup was sent away, Hurricane Camille hit the Mississippi coast and took a terrific toll, killing more than two hundred people and destroying thousands of homes and businesses. The state of Mississippi condemned the Jessup place and tore it down, eventually building a domed coliseum on the site—a project that local boosters hoped would finally bring

the coast to its rightful place in the big leagues. But the coliseum never did that, and it became the site of local beauty pageants, wrestling matches, and the home games of a minor-league basketball team.

JESSUP was just fifty-two when Judge Russell sentenced him to prison, but everything after that day was just a protracted old age. He spent a year and a day in the Texarkana prison, and then he and Nita moved onto one of Mr. Biglane's properties, outside Natchez, where Jessup worked as a caretaker. He regathered his beloved roosters, but he was careful about fighting them, and Judge Russell let him know that he was keeping a close watch. Jessup so feared breaking his parole and going back to prison that he didn't dare preach again, and he even declined to say the benediction at a Jessup-brothers reunion at Byron's church, in Lexington, Kentucky. "He was forbidden to *pray*," Jimmie said, recalling that time. "Now, you talk about persecution—*forbidden to pray!*" Russell was really interested only in making sure that Jessup didn't start up another radio ministry, but there was no chance of that. "After prison," said Jimmie, "he was really kind of broken down."

Jessup got permission to move to Arlington, Texas, where Jimmie was living and was doing some preaching, and, with Jimmie's help, he got a job selling cars and eventually bought a little dealership of his own. He did get another chance to enthrall a large crowd when he was invited to speak to prisoners in a Mexican penitentiary, where he gave one of the most heartfelt sermons of his life. Wearing a white dinner jacket and a black bow tie, he tearfully told the Mexican prisoners—from whom he had absolutely nothing to gain—that he knew all about "the feelin' that came into your hearts when you laid down on that bed for the first night here," and he went on, "The sun had gone down, and the dark shadows gathered, and in the stillness of the night, the sorrow that was in your heart, you know it, and I know it. I know what it is to be behind these bars. . . . I'm sincere when I tell you this, you may feel that you're lonely, and you may feel that at times you have no one. . . . He'll answer your prayers. God



Artist

PARK



"Which thing do I press?"



Mysterious Man Who Feeds the Pigeons



"Is everything boring enough for you, sir?"

can work miracles in your life. God can make it easy for you to spend your time here."

Jessup stayed in Texas until his probation period was over, and he moved back home to Mississippi. But he didn't try to find a place on the coast; instead, he settled on a small piece of land twenty miles north, beside the highway to Jackson. This is where my mother and I saw Jessup in the spring of 1991, on the day that he hurled himself to the kitchen floor and performed his one-handed pushups. There was a giant-screen television in his living room, tuned to CNN; the only time Jessup looked at it, though, was during a report that Jim Bakker's prison sentence had been reduced. Jessup watched but did not comment. Nita, still utterly attentive to Jack, as she called her husband, fetched one of the boxes from the floor. It was filled with ancient photographs and testimonies from his revival-tent days, and Jessup became animated as he went through the stuff, giving a narrative of his youthful triumphs.

"Ooh, listen! There's never in the history of the world been a greater testimony than *this* lady—this is Nellie Prescott, San Antonio, Texas. She had

never had a pair of factory-made shoes on in her life, and her feet were turned sideways. They were stiff, *stiff*. And we prayed for her, and God *healed* her, and her feet just straightened up just like that on the stage, whenever I prayed for her, and she went and bought her some shoes. . . . Here's my prayer by the oldest olive tree in the Garden of Gethsemane, where I fasted and prayed. . . . Here's the governor's mother, right here, the governor of Oklahoma, Mrs. Etta Graham Turner, right there. . . . All right, here's another little girl right here, there's never been a greater miracle in the world than this one right here. She was totally disabled to walk, and the Shriners had treated her case and had given it up for years and years and *years*, and this little girl right here, and they brought her to me on the stretcher, and she was healed and walked off the stage that night, and has been walkin' ever since then."

He went on like that for a good while, until it was time for me to leave. At one point in our conversation, I asked him about prison, and what had been the hardest part of it for him. "The greatest hurt that I've ever had is to my pride—the right kind of pride a person is supposed to have. To be taken from

the pulpit and sent to prison. And for what? It wasn't for raping somebody. It wasn't over money, it wasn't for anything like that. And the lady who wrote to us, she only sent two dollars in the mail."

I DIDN'T see Reverend Jessup after that for two years, until the spring of 1993, when my mother called to say that he was gravely ill. Cancer of the esophagus had been diagnosed, and the doctors weren't optimistic. Jessup had asked her to visit him in Mississippi, and she wanted to know if I would like to see him, too. As it happened, I was going to Mississippi anyway, to visit Pee Wee Maddux, who had invited me down to talk over his old times with Reverend Jessup. Pee Wee had told me then that when he tried to call Jessup for a reconciliation the Reverend had hung up the phone.

I met Mama at the New Orleans airport and rented a car, and as we crossed the Lake Pontchartrain causeway heading into Mississippi she said, "God has answered prayer about those chickens."

"What do you mean?"

"Charles has finally got rid of them. He told me he's sold them to a man in Texas, who has already come and taken half of them." When we arrived at Jessup's place, of course, the roosters were still there, in all their strutting glory. I held my tongue, and we went inside. There Reverend Jessup got up from a resting place and greeted us. It was hot and dark in that room, like the nearness of death, I thought, but Nita explained that Charles's doctors were afraid he might catch a cold, so they had turned the air-conditioner off. Jessup was dressed nattily, as always, but his shoes were off, and the top button of his trousers was open, even though they were baggy around his shrinking waist. He said that he had lost eleven pounds in a week, and that the only nourishment he could take in was a fortified milk that he drank through a glass straw. His voice was weak but clear. When I asked him (trying not to be cruel) whether he expected his own miracle healing, he said, "Yes, I do. God is assistin' me, I'm bein' assisted through medication. I believe that these prayers that I'm prayin' and others are prayin', your mama's prayin', and various preachers are prayin'—I believe that I'm gonna wake up some mornin' here and

I'm gonna be completely all right and my cancer's gonna be gone."

When Mama and I returned the next day, I had disturbing news: Pee Wee Maddux, beset by a deep depression, had killed himself with a Smith & Wesson .38. Jessup had already heard this news, down at the barbershop; he said something about Judas, and I changed the subject. When we left, I shook his hand, and his skin was burning hot. In the car, I said, "Mama, I think that's the last time you'll see Reverend Jessup."

"Yes, I think so," she replied. "But isn't it marvellous that God has given him this little extra time to get right with Him?" I drove past the roosters and out onto the highway to New Orleans.

Over the next couple of months, I talked to Reverend Jessup several times by telephone, and he sounded quite strong, answering my concern about wearing him out by saying, "It's a tonic just to hear your voice." At one point, I asked whether his fate might have been directed by the way he had lived his life. I asked him to consider whether his ruin might have in fact been an act of divine retribution.

"You mean, was there a reason for it all happenin' that way?" he asked, and he paused for a long moment, then said, "No, I don't know why it had to happen that way. I can't see why God would direct that to happen to me, because I was sincere in my preachin' and doin' lots and lots and lots of good for humanity. . . . Could be. I'm human, too." But he didn't really think so.

In late June, the man from Texas really did come to Mississippi and take Jessup's birds. I talked to Jessup the next day, and he said he missed the roosters, adding, "But I asked the Lord to take the love of the game fowl out of my heart, and I believe he's done that."

One Saturday morning in July, 1993, he died in his sleep.

THE Devil is beating his wife" is how Reverend Jessup used to describe the meteorological phenomenon of sunshine during a rain, and that was the weather on the morning he was buried. He was dressed in his preaching clothes—a three-piece ice-cream suit made of fine cloth, a white shirt, and a blue-and-white tie with one of those perfect knots that morticians always seem to manage. His hands were

clasped over his black-backed King James Bible, and there was a fresh carnation in his lapel. Next to his casket—a top-of-the-line model, white with pink satin lining—stood a huge funeral wreath from one of Jessup's fellow-evangelists, bearing the inscription "He was a preacher's preacher. Give him fifty miles of elbow room."

The chapel service, at the Riemann Funeral Home, on Highway 49, didn't draw a Jessup-sized crowd—only seventy-five people or so—and there were no luminaries. But three preachers did travel across the country to be there: Ralph and Doyle Hart, two of the evangelistic Hart brothers, and A. L. (Reverend Al) Wyrick, each of whom had been inspired by J. Charles Jessup, and each of whom had weathered controversies in his own ministry. Brother Doyle's hair and medium-length beard were dyed black, and he wore an electric-guitar tiepin and high-heeled loafers; his young wife, who matched his sartorial flash, was the group's appointed photographer, posing the evangelists and the surviving Jessup brothers for group shots, and leaning into the casket for a closeup of Brother Charles. Brother Ralph, wearing a bracelet, a pinkie ring, and a diamond-studded gold watchband, leaned into the casket, patted Jessup on the chest, said, "Charles, you were a great warrior," and then looked up to pose for a snapshot. Reverend Al told me the story of how, as a young seminary student, he had been moved by Jessup's radio broadcasts, and had travelled from Indiana to Gulfport to meet the great man. Jessup had given him a hundred-dollar bill—the first he had ever seen—and he built his own ministry, going on the Mexican radio

stations and eventually establishing the United Faith Foundation, in Fresno, California, where he now receives so much mail that he has his own Zip Code. "Just put 93761 and a stamp on the envelope and I'll get it," he said. Among these men I was able to see Jessup in his context, which was not particularly uplifting, but the paradox of his life suddenly made sense. In a religion in which redemption is the whole point, and whose God not only loves a sinner but seems to prefer one, human failing is a required ingredient, even for a preacher.

In the chapel, the Hart brothers told their stories about Jessup: Doyle remembered the time that Charles had saved his life by lifting with his bare hands a tent's center pole that had fallen on top of him, and Reverend Al sang the opening lines of the Jessup theme song, "Look Away to Heaven":

When I get to Heaven, gonna sing and shout,
Ain't nobody there gonna turn me out.
When I get to Heaven, gonna put on my shoes,
And walk around and tell the good news.

A local minister named Reverend Powell preached the main sermon, and it was just that—a full-bore, hellfire-and-brimstone oration that culminated, to my amazement, in an altar call. (It was later explained to me that nothing inspires a surrender to Christ like the presence of a corpse.)

Jessup was to be buried in a cemetery off the beach highway, next to his parents, and it was a long drive down to the coast from the funeral parlor. Led by a sheriff's deputy, the procession made its way to Interstate 10, across the Tchoutacabouffa River, then down side streets and across the bridge over Bayou Bernard. As we slowly progressed, the oncoming traffic stopped and pulled to the side of the road, as is the custom in Mississippi when a funeral line drives by. Finally, we turned onto Beauvoir Road and toward the beach, passing the Confederate Cemetery on the left, and, on the right, the grounds of the old Jessup place. The procession paused before turning toward the cemetery, and it struck me that when Jessup had finally come home it was in a manner that he would have appreciated: with a crowd following him, and riding in the back of a new gold Cadillac. ♦



FICTION

MISTER MOVIE-MAN

The author's second novel went up in flames—and took four decades to write.

BY RALPH ELLISON

When Ralph Ellison died, in April, 1994, at the age of eighty, he had been working on his second novel for forty years. That novel had been awaited more keenly, perhaps, than any other in American literary history. And yet Ellison refused to keep to any timetable but his own. He was still working on "the transitions," he told anyone who asked.

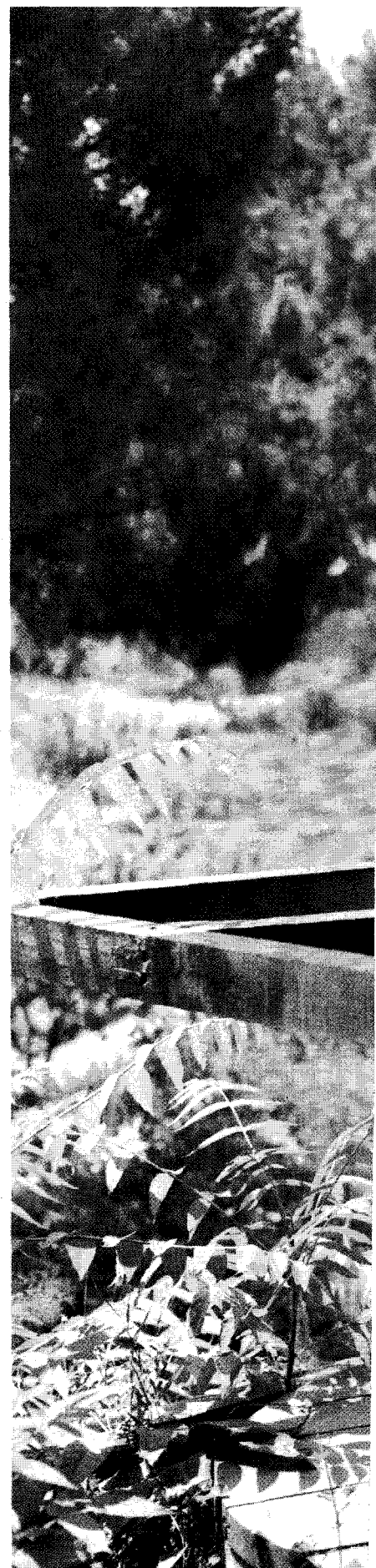
Ellison's debut, of course, had been extraordinary. The publication, in 1952, of "Invisible Man" won him the National Book Award, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, a place in the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a position as the Albert Schweitzer Professor of Humanities at New York University. Many readers and critics considered it the finest American novel since the Second World War. To follow it would not be easy, but by 1954 Ellison had begun writing. The second novel, Ellison once explained, tells the story of a "little boy of indefinite race who looks white and who, through a series of circumstances, comes to be reared by [a] Negro minister"—and eventually grows up to become a virulently racist United States senator. In 1959, Saul Bellow read part of the manuscript and published an excerpt in his magazine, *The Noble Savage*. In 1967, however, much of the novel was lost in a fire at Ellison's summer house,

in Plainfield, Massachusetts. "It wasn't the entire manuscript," he told *The New Yorker* in March, 1994, "but it was over three hundred and sixty pages. There was no copy." According to Ellison's friends, it was years before he went back to work on the book. As the novelist and cultural historian Albert Murray remembers, "Ralph was just devastated. He just closed in on himself for a long time." When he did start again, the book emerged somewhat differently. "I was trying to reimagine the situation. The characters are the same and the mixture of language is the same. But nuances are different." By the time of his death, Ellison had written some two thousand manuscript pages, the heart of which his literary executor, John Callahan, has edited into the forthcoming novel "Juneteenth."

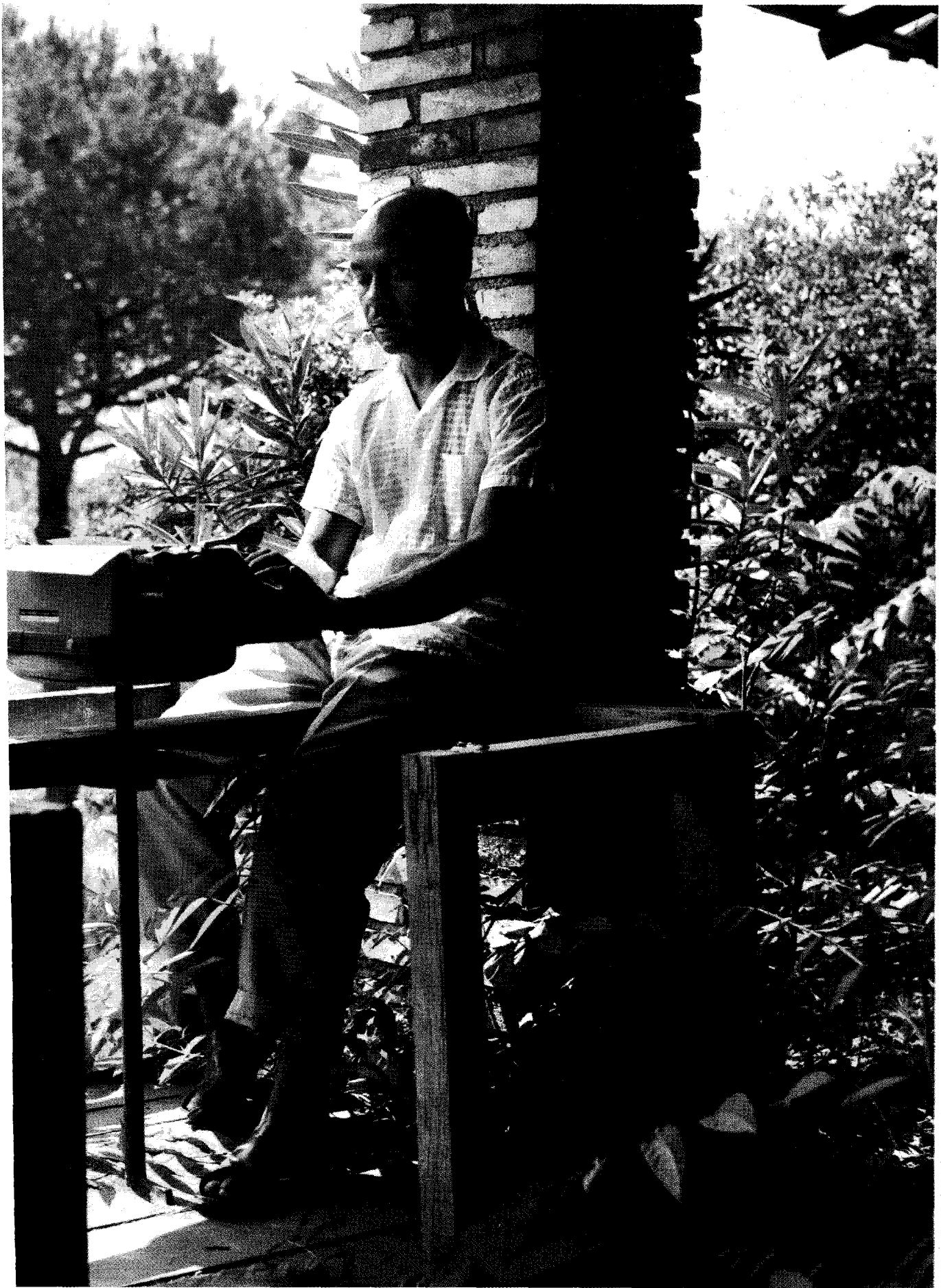
The narrative of the novel alternates between the old minister's lyrical recounting of the events of the past and the senator's feverish, dreamlike reminiscences. In the following chapter, which has been slightly abridged, the senator remembers his life in the late nineteen-twenties, the period between his black childhood and his white adulthood, during which he travelled through the Southwest, posing as a professional filmmaker, and had a brief but intense affair with an Oklahoma girl.

WE were under the trees, away from the town, away from Donelson, Karp, and the camera. There, how glorious to have been there. Below, the park-space showed; shade here, sun there, in a dreamy, dappled midafternoon haze. We were there. High up the trees flurried with birdsong, and one clear note sang above the rest, a lucid, soaring strand of sound; while in the grass cicadas dreamed. For a moment we stood there looking down the gentle rising-falling of the land, while far away a

cowbell tinkled, small across some hidden field beyond the woods. Milkweed ran across the ground. Imagine to remember—was it ever? Still. Thistle purple-blue, flowers blue, wisteria loud against an old rock wall—was this the season or another time? Certainly there were the early violets among the fallen pine needles—ago, too, but that was Alabama and lonesome. Here she was close beside me and as we moved down the grassy slope the touch of her cool sweat-dampened arm came soft against me and went and came coolly again and



Ralph Ellison, outside his studio



JAMES WHITMORE/LIFE MAGAZINE © TIME INC.

ican Academy in Rome, in 1957. He was working on "the transitions," he told anyone who asked about his second novel.

then again as we went down the hill into the sun. Oh keep coming coming— Then through the sun into the dappled shade. How long ago, this comes comes a fall? Aches here, aches in spring like a lost limb refusing to recognize its dismemberment, no need to deny. Then, too, but sweet. Coming just above my shoulder her glossy head, her hair in two heavy braids, and I seeing the small gold ring sunk snug in the pink-brown berry of her ear. A smile dreaming on her serenely profiled face. Saying inside my head, Touch me, touch me, touch me, you . . . And remembered the one phrase, "teasing brown," and used it, feeling her cool bare flesh so thinly veiled with fragrant sweat against my short-sleeved arm and said aloud,

Are you one?

One what? she answered me, turning her face with her eyes dreaming a smile. What're you talking about, Mister Man?

You, I said. Are you a teasing brown?

She laughed and I could feel her coming to me in waves, heavy around me, soft like hands pressing gently along the small of my back, sounding the column of my spine. I breathed her in, all the ripeness, all the sweetness, all the musky mysterious charm and the green afternoon approving. She smiled, her eyes turned up to mine, her irises soft as scuppernongs in their gentle, blue-white orbs.

It must have been some ole blues singer you learned that from, she said.

Maybe so, you're probably right, but are you?

I'm brown, and that's a plain fact for anybody to see, she said. And the full black eyes were on me now, softly laughing. But I'm not teasing anybody. I'm the country one, Mister Big-City Man. Mister Moving-Picture Man. You teasing me. Don't you like brown-skinned folks?

Now just what do you think? I said.

I think a lot of things, she said, but—

She smiled again and the whole afternoon seemed to swing around her glossy head. I breathed deeply the blossoms and sunlight and there was a sigh in it. I thought, Here is the place to stay, grow up with the state, take root. . . . Yes, here. Come, come. She pointed:

You want to go down yonder under those trees? It looks to me like a fine place to lay the spread.

Yes, I said, swinging the basket in my hand. Yes, I want to go anywhere you say, Miss Teasing Brown, yes I do.

But you're looking at me, she said. Look down yonder where I mean, she pointed. See, under that tree with the blossoms.

A fine peach fuzz of hair showed on her levelled arm, almost golden in the sunlight.

It's fine, I said. Just the place for a time like this.

A bee danced by as on a thread. I felt a suspension of time. Standing still, my eyes in the tree of blossoms, I let it move through me. Eden, I thought, Eden is a lie that never was. And Adam? His name was Snake. And Eve's? An aphrodisiac best served with raw fresh oysters on the half shell with a good white wine. The spirit's there. . . . She arose she rose she rose up from the waves.

Mister Movie-Man, she said, you sure have a lot of sleep in your voice.

And her laughter was gay in the afternoon stillness, shaping and making the quiet alive. There was no alienation ringing in that laugh, so I joined her, startling the quiet. We laughed and laughed. I picked up a smooth stone and sent it sailing, a blossom bursting as it was kissed by a bee. Dreamer, I said, I'm full of dream—

And we came through the parklike space, into shade and out again, her cool skin touching mine. Touching and leaving and coming again unself-consciously, skin teasing skin in gentle friction. And she was a fragrance mixed with the spicy odors of the parklike space broken by light and shadow. My purpose, too. And I thought, Turn back now. Now is the time, leave her and go West. You've lingered long enough, so leave before complications. So I thought. But suddenly she said,

Look!

And there beneath a bush I saw a white rabbit, its pink nose testing the air before its alerted, pink-veined ears. It watched us moving by, frozen beneath a flowering shrub.

That's somebody's Easter bunny lost out here in the woods, she said. I hope nothing gets him 'cause he don't look like he knows how to take care of himself. There's foxes and hawks out here. Even evil ole wildcats. Poor little ole thing.

We went on, in the shade now, the light softly filtering the high-branched trees, her shoulder touching my arm and that wave of her enfolding me as cool mist clings to a hot hollow at twilight, my mind saying, No, this is enough, leave now. Leave the moment unbroken in its becoming. Fly before you fall, flee before you fail— And then I stumbled over the buried stone and heard her saying,

Watch out there, Mister Movie-Man.

And I felt her hand upon my arm and I could not breathe.

Pink blossoms were thick in the tree, the petals scattered broadside upon the grass, and as I breathed them in the fragrance mixed wildly with her own and that cool touching and going of her peach-brown arm sang in me like passionate words whispered in a dark place. Who spread the petals along our path, my mind asked, who arched this afternoon above our heads? And looking down at her feet twinkling in and out below her long, ankle-length skirt, I said, How beautiful are your feet in shoes, Miss Teasing Brown.

She stopped and looked at me full face, a question in her dark eyes.

You're the tease, she said. I think you're laughing at me, Movie-Man. Though he *was* part Cherokee, my papa wasn't no prince and you know it. You see, I know where those words come from.

I looked at her, suddenly cold, as I saw the sparks in her eyes' black depths. I said,

No, no, I'm not laughing at all. To me they are beautiful, princess or no princess. And it doesn't take a Solomon to say how beautiful are thy feet in sandals.

I don't know about you, she said, I swear I don't know about you, Mister Movie-Man.

There's nothing to know, I said. I come like water, and like wind I go— only faster. I laughed, remembering:

Said a rabbit to a rabbit
Love ain't nothing but a habit
Hello there, Mister Rabbit.

You're fast, all right, she said, kneeling and looking up past my head to the sky.

There's not a cloud to be seen, she sighed.

That's how it was, no clouds, only

tall trees filtering the sunlight back across the clear space and the blossoms above. Standing there I watched her remove the cloth from the basket and begin spreading it upon the grass.

Why don't you sit down and stay a while, she said, patting a place for me.

I sat, watching with my chin resting upon my knees as her hands came and went, removing sandwiches wrapped in wax paper from the basket, placing them on the cloth.

These here are chicken, she said, and these ham, and *these* are Texas hots.

And there were boiled eggs wrapped in twists of paper like favors for a children's party; and tomatoes, and a chocolate cake and a thermos of iced tea with mint leaves and lemon slices floating in it. She served with a gentle feminine flair of which I would have denied she was capable. I was on dangerous ground.

Do you like a drumstick? she said. Men usually like a drumstick, though we also have the breast.

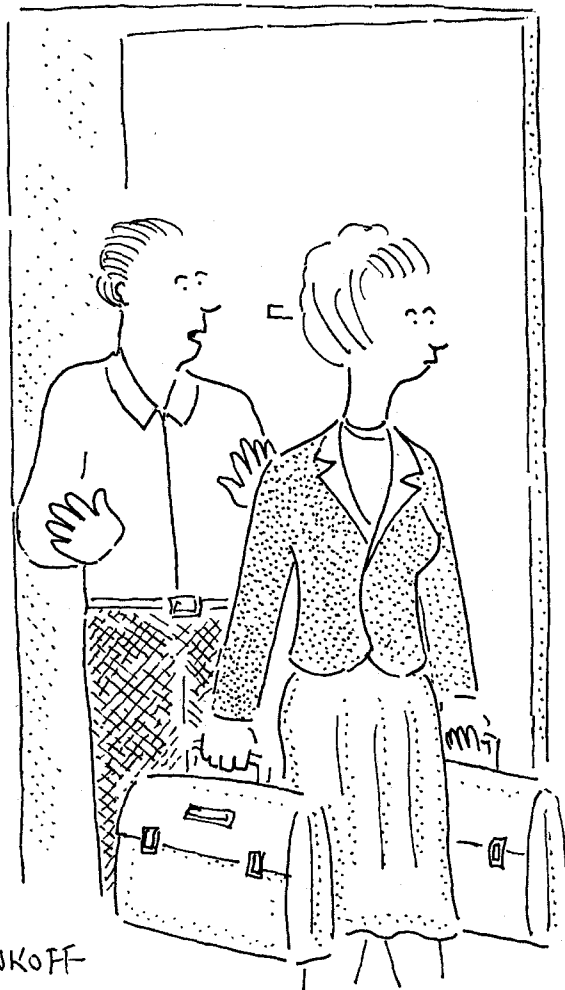
I prefer the drumstick, I said. Do you know many men?

More than we have drumsticks. More than we have breasts, too. She broke off. —What you mean, do I know many men?

Thanks, I said. It was crisp and flaky, a nice weight in the fingers. I mean *beaux*, I said.

Boy *beaux* but no men *beaux*. They all been boy *beaux*, Mister Movie-Man, and they don't really count. Lord, I almost forgot the coleslaw. Here it is in this mayonnaise jar. Let me help your plate to some.

I watched her, thinking wildly, What would happen to this natural grace under coaching? With a formal veil placed between it and the sharp world and all the lessons learned and carried out with this native graciousness to warm the social skills? Not a light against a screen but for keeps, Newport in July, Antibes with the proper costumes. Saratoga. Could she fly right? With a sari, say, enfolding her girlish charm? What if I taught her to speak and not to speak, to parry in polished tone the innuendoes dropped over cocktail crystal? To master the smile in time that saves lines? With a diamond of a certain size on that slender hand. Or an emerald, its watery green in platinum



MANKOFF

"So soon? But we've barely scratched the surface of our discontent."

against that peach-brown skin. Who blushed this peach? . . . Did the blight I brought begin in fantasy? There was a part in her black hair; her scalp showed clearly through.

I said, The chicken is wonderful. How'd you get it so flaky?

I cooked it till it was done, she said. She made a face at me. How'd you learn to make moving pictures?

Oh that's a secret, I said.

Frying chicken is a secret, too, she said.

I laughed. You baked the bread, too. Is that a secret?

Uh-huh, sure I did. Most folks do their own baking in this town—only that's not a secret.

It's almost as good as the chicken, I said.

Thank you, Mister Movie-Man. It's right nice for you to say so. But I won't believe you unless you eat a lot. There's

plenty and I expect a man to eat like a man.

And suddenly I had dressed her in a pink sari, swathing her girlish form in Indian silk, a scarlet mark of caste on her forehead, and me in tails and turban of immaculate white, observing her with pride as now her head goes back with a gay burst of laughter, her throat clean and curved and alive and as alive as a robin's, following some polished shaft of wit. No, the turban a mistake for me but the sari for her, yes. Gold brings out the blue of blue eyes. A gold turban for me. Walking her along Fifth Avenue with all the eyes reacting and she no flapper but something more formed, more realized, more magically achieved, and the crowd's imagination whirling like these blossoms tossed in a whirlwind and blown in the million directions of their hopes, hates, fancies, dreams, and we, she and I, become all

things to all minds, drawing out their very souls, their potentialities set athrob by the passage of our forms through their atmosphere, sending them ever seeking for some finer thing. Angels and swine and bearers of divers flags and banners becoming more and less than themselves in the vortex of our ambiguity. . . . Thoughts like these while before me she nibbled a chicken wing undreaming of my wildness. Ah, my fair warrior, my cooing dove, we'll create possibility out of rags and bones and hanks of hair, out of silks and satins and bits of fur, out of gestures and inflections of voice and scents orchestrated funky sweet; with emphatic nods and elusive sympathies and affirmations and every move to all of them a danced proclamation of "I believe you can, I know you can; we can in faith achieve the purest dream of our most real realities—look upon us two and be your finest possibilities."

Why are you looking at me like that? she said.

And there she was again, before me with her warm, high-cheeked face tilted to one side in question, the fine throat rising out of the white blouse, brown, be-peached, as alive and expressive as any singing bird's. She wore a small gold watch pinned to her waist and her napkin was tucked there and I said, I was dreaming. Did you realize that you make men dream?

Her mouth became a firm straight line beneath her smiling eyes.

You sitting here eating my fried chicken and can tell me you're dreaming? And her head went back in girlish pout. You give me back my something-to-eat this very minute!

But it's all part of the dream, I said. You and the blossoms and the lunch and the weather. All we need is some cold watermelon or perhaps some peach ice cream.

She arched her eyebrows and shook her head. Now just listen to him. Sounds like he wants everything. I can't figure you out, Mister Movie-Man, she said.

What do you mean?

The way you talk sometimes. Once in a while you sound just like one of us and I can't tell whether you mean it or just do it to make fun of me.

But you know I wouldn't make fun of you. You know I wouldn't. . . .

I hope not, she said, but you do sound like us once in a while, especially when you get that dreamy look on your face. . . .

I haven't noticed, I said. I just talk as I feel.

Well, I guess you feel like us every once in a while, I mean. Can I ask you a question?

Anything at all, Miss Teasing Brown, I said.

She smiled and lowered her sand-

wich. Where'd you come from to here, Mister Movie-Man?

From different places back East, I said.

Oh, she said, I kinda thought so. . . . You not from Chicago?

Never been there, I said. And looking at her nibbling the sandwich, her soft eyes on my face, I thought of some of them. *We had had a rough time, coming through all of that cloudburst of rain, and the unfriendly towns where the oil rigs pounded night and day, making the trip longer and our money shorter and shorter. Getting stuck in the mud here and having engine trouble there, the tires going twice and the top being split by hailstones the size of baseballs and almost losing all of the equipment off a shaky ferry when we crossed a creek in Missouri. Still, there was some luck with us—my luck or maybe Karp's—I have always honored my luck—and we managed to keep the film and the equipment dry and the patches and the boots held on the tires until we reached her town. But on our way, moving through the Ozarks and the roads steep and rocky and having to push the car out of ruts and Karp complaining of ever having left the East and complaining, as we strained and sweated in the mud, against all the goy world and all our troubles were goy and our journey goy and goy our schemes. But then along the way Donelson goaded him on: Why the hell, Sweet Jesus, did you ever leave Egypt and all those spades?*

Why didn't you stay and lay Pharaoh's second-best daughter and make another Moses? Put your back into it, Jew boy. Act like a white man for once.

And having to step between them. . . . What would she have made of it, the glamour she longed for locked in such grubby circumstance? Driving them as I was driven and some towns suspicious and others without the proper places to work and the people uninterested or the days without sun and the long hot stretches of green green green with no thoughts beyond continuing and little shade—Amen! Then back there in the town where in the hotel the whores were all so ladylike, with high-style airs and comic bitchery and the bellhop: black—except for the fat, bald-headed, full-lipped captain, whose pale, milky skin was so dense with



"I see jury selection has begun."

freckles that he looked like a white man who'd rusted in the rain three days after drowning. He had our number when we first walked in, though how much of it I couldn't tell, but when I looked at him the spots seemed to detach themselves before my eyes and move to a tango rhythm across his broad expanse of face—da de dum dum—and back again. His eyes casing me as though to say, I know and you know that I know, so what are you going to do about it? I slipped him a five we couldn't afford and I swear those spots returned each to its allotted place—*muy pronto*.

Thank you sub! he said. It's awfully white of you.

He knew all right, and he knew some-one important, too, selling white women and bootleg whiskey to the leading white citizens and the drummer trade and to a few not so leading black ones who slipped in unctuously wearing starched waiter's jackets with the buttons missing. Yes, sub! and donating good sums of money to the Afro-American Episcopal Missionary Society and to a finishing school for young black upper-class ladies in Baltimore. He had it made all right, with certain complications of adjustment it's true, but made. He could have taught us all. I kept away from him while we waited for sun and opportunity in that town in which he appeared to be the only one with a capacity for fantasy. Dominated by those high gray walls and the freedom of both those inside and out seemed to be measured in days marked off on the calendar. I'm number so-and-so and I know my time and knowing my time I know the who-what-why-wherefore of me. No dreams, please. Well, so much the worse for you. . . . We tried everyone from the Chamber of Commerce to the bootleggers and no one interested in backing us in bringing a little poetry to the town. We almost starved, broke and cooking beans in our room, patching and pressing with a secret iron borrowed from one of the girls until her pimp threatened Donelson. We left before dawn, half drunk and unwashed and our bills unpaid, slipping into the damp streets by the baggage entrance, past seven stacks of pulp magazines abandoned by the drummers—Argosy, Blue Book, Ace, and Golden Book being saved by the baggage man for the kids in his neighborhood—agent of cultural baggage—doing what he could to keep them reading, stopping on the outskirts of the town as the light grew and buying cheese and crackers in a lamplit

general store where the men on the road gang bought their lunch. And near Holdenville getting those shots of the motorcycle circling the overflow embankment around the storage tank in the refinery yard, leaning toward the parallel and his eyes like set points of madness behind his goggles, bent low, close over the handlebars, roaring as though intent upon circling there forever. . . . MOVIE TYCOONS VISIT CITY was the headline and there we were looking out from page 1, my arms across their shoulders and all three looking dashing and devil-may-care, each with goggles on forehead and each with an air of potency, mystery. The camera in the foreground. It made it easy and I kept things simple, a pageant dedicated to the founding of the town with all the old-timers parading past the camera on horseback, or in buckboards, then sitting before the courthouse in funeral-parlor chairs and an Indian or two in the background. Shot everything from low angles to make them tall and imposing, and the fire engines I made a half-block long. Holdenville, yes, the weather was fine and Holdenville couldn't hold us. No, but what we made there was lost in Ponca City. Roustabouts, Indians, a thousand and one ranch hands, and Wild Bill Tillman in the flesh in a white suit and white Stetson and astride a white horse every hour of every day in the streets. Yes, but in the middle of a roaring circus who has time for silent scenes? Donelson went wild in the town, getting hot on the dice and winning a thousand then losing our stake before they cooled him off. Then when he asked to see the dice they threw him into the street. There was hardly enough money for gas then Karp to the rescue, found a cousin who helped us on our way. And what a cousin, walking around in a blanket, a bullet-smashed derby, and a necklace of rattlesnake buttons, selling snake oil and mustard plasters. Morris, the Osage Indian Jew, of whom Karp disapproved. Listen, Morris said, here there's no minyan in fifty miles so what if I temporarily joined another tribe? And let me tell you something, wise guy: I been scalped like the best of them!

I wanted him to join us but Karp was against it. But what a town, everything in our grasp: gunplay and Indians, dancehall girls, cowboys and gamblers, gunmen, bandits, rustlers, and law officers, the real frontier atmosphere and Wild Bill acting himself right off a circus poster. But it was all too real and when we set up the camera

on the street they gathered around, looking from everywhere. Then, understanding, they knocked us down and fifteen .45s were looking us dead in the eye.

What's the big idea, I said.

What's your name, the one-eyed one said.

We told him and what we were about.

Pictures, he said. We don't need any dam' pictures around here.

Maybe you don't but other folks do, Donelson said. We'll put this town on the map.

Map? the one-eyed one said. We don't want it on any goddam map. You want to ruin everything?

We're trying to help, Karp said. We can help it grow.

We don't need any help. We don't want no growing. Get up on your knees. He pointed the pistol.

We looked into their miscellaneous faces and did what he said.

All right, One-eye said, from now on you three cockies are going to be known as the three monkeys. . . .

Why you—Donelson began, starting up.

One-eye moved without bending. There was a flashing arc of movement and at the smackcrunch of impact Donelson sprawled in the dirt, his cheek flaming with the red imprint of a .45's long barrel.

Now shut up, Rebel, One-eye said, and you'll keep healthy.

God damn you, Donelson said, scrambling to his knees. But this time I grabbed him, holding on.

Shut up, I said, we're outnumbered. Can't you see that?

Now you're talking, One-eye said, glaring down. And don't you forget it! Outnumbered, outgunned, and outmanned!

He grinned, shaking the whiskey to an oily foam, his thumb over the bottlemouth. And you, he said, dousing whiskey on Donelson's head, I now baptize Mister Speak-No-Evil. So from now on keep your big cotton-pickin' mouth shut tight as your daddy's smokehouse!

Then, pouring whiskey on Karp's bowed head, he said, And your buddy here is named forthwith, like the lawyers say, Hear-No-Evil.

Out of the corner of his swelling mouth Donelson's voice came harsh and violent. All right, Israelite, he said. Where's your goddam cunning now? Why don't you blow your fucking horn!

Karp looked straight ahead, kneeling there in the dust, his face calm, his eyes tragic and resentful yet resigned. As though the



"'Oprah' is definite, Barnes & Noble is giving you front windows, and Norman Mailer has agreed to a feud."

world was affirmed in the pattern of his forefathers' prediction. So he was prepared to die a stranger in a strange land, resigned before even this random fulfillment of prophecy. The goyim were repeating once more their transgression against him. . . .

I shook my head, feeling the hot splash of whiskey soaking my skull. My eyes stung as it coursed down my face and I suppressed a scream, holding my breath. And I seemed to be walking under water and I no longer saw them there above me. For I was in the kingdom of the dead, tight and enclosed.

Don't appear to like it much, someone said, and laughed.

And you, One-eye said, I name See-No-Evil.

I could see him then, his collar band held with a brass button, his rotten teeth, his drooped lid, stepping back and the others no longer threatening but laughing. My knees were aching but I could see very sharply now. The hair that showed on his knuckles, sprouted from his ear, flared nostrils.

All right, boys, One-eye said, let 'em up.

We got up and I picked up the camera and folded the tripod. A drop of whiskey had splashed the lens and I polished it away with the end of my tie. I looked—Donelson's face was bright red and twitching as he watched One-eye take a drink and pass the bottle around.

Tell me something, Donelson said.

What's that?

What time would you say it was?

Time? One-eye said. How the hell would I know? In this town we make our own fucking time. . . .

MISTER MOVIE-MAN, she said, you dreaming again?

Not now, I said. Time is a juxtaposing of pains and pain hurts even after the object is gone, faded.

You better not be while you're eating. But you were gone somewhere, flew right away from me. Or maybe you were thinking about the picture?

No, I said. Only about you. You make a very nice picture.

She looked a question, her head to one side. I sure hope I can act like you want me to, she said. I really never thought of being in a picture before but now I sure want to be able to do it. Will there be any fighting in it?

Some, I said.

And horses?

I'm not sure about that, I said. But there'll be love scenes. . . .

You mean I'll have to kiss somebody?

Sure, that's part of the love scene.

But in front of all those folks . . . and with his girl looking? She's angry with me already—

There'll be many more folks to see the picture, I said.

But that's different, she said. I won't be there. . . .

Don't worry about it, I said. I'll teach you how it's done. Now was the time to begin and I put down my sandwich and moved. I saw her large eyes and suddenly I ceased to dream.

You just work in the contest and win, I said. I'll take care of the rest. I was disturbed.

Oh, I will, she said. I'll raise more money than all the other girls put together. You'll have to give me the best part. . . .

Yes, I said, the best is yet to be, but you girls will have to work hard. Stir up the interest of everyone. Karp insists that we have the full coöperation of the community. . . .

Which one is Mr. Karp, the one with the camera?

No, that's Donelson. Right now Donelson is doing the shooting. Later on I'll take over. Karp is the other one.

Well, he won't have to worry because everybody is interested already. Two clubs are planning dances and another one—well, they're going to give a bar-becue. Is Mr. Karp the boss?

Boss? No, he's just a partner like the rest of us. We're the three partners. What other plans do you have?

We're still thinking up things to do. We plan to give a combination hayride and trip-around-the-world.

What's a trip-around-the-world?

That's when you ride to different parts of town and go to different houses and in each house they have the food of some country—like Mexico, for instance, and it's all decorated like a Mexican house and the boys and girls who give that part of the party will be dressed in Mexican costumes. And when you get there you buy the food and they give you some drinks and you can dance and have a good time. Then after a while everybody piles into the hay and the wagon goes to another house and there they'll find another country and another party. It keeps going on just like that.

That's interesting, I said, but you want to work hard on the popularity contest.

I mean to, she said, I really have to have that part. I like plays and things, they kind of take you out of yourself.

They do, I thought, and you have no idea how far.

Some English people were here last

year and they put on some wonderful shows. With nice scenery and music and everything. You couldn't always understand what they were saying but it sounded so fine. Like listening to folks sing some of that opera music in a different language.

Did many folks go to see them?

Quite a few, she said. I went every night. A lot of folks did.

That's very good, but where'd they give the plays?

They gave them in the school auditorium. There's a stage there and they brought their own scenery for one of the plays. But you know something, Mister Movie-Man?

No, what?

When you listened to them real close you could see scenery that wasn't on the stage. They *said* the scenery and you could see it just as clear. You really could.

That's right, I said. Sometimes you can. But that's with a certain kind of play, movies are different. Everything has to be seen or scene. You've got good ears though. I touched where the gold wire entered the soft lobe of her ear. She watched silently. Watched my hand.

Thank you, Mister Movie-Man, she said, and have another drumstick. . .

I thought about the contest and all their plans. A thousand would get us to the coast and help us get a start. . . Going to what nation in what territory? And this time I'd let Karp hold the cash, he was practical and more dependable than Donelson. He was down in the business district picking up a few dollars at his jeweller's trade. He could make a watch from the start, give him the tools, the metal, and the lathe. . .

What will the story be about? she said.

I haven't decided yet, I said, but I'm working on it.

Well, I'm sure glad to hear that.

Why?

Because I saw your friends taking pictures all over the place. What were they doing that for?

Oh that, I said, they're just chasing shadows, shooting scenes for background. Later on when we start working we'll use them, splice them in. Pictures aren't made in a straight line. We take a little bit of this and a little of that

and then it's all looked at and selected and made into a whole. . .

You mean you piece it together?

That's the idea, I said.

Well tell me something! she said. Isn't that just marvellous? Just like making a scrap quilt, I guess; one of those with all the colors of the rainbow in it, only more complicated. Is that it?

Just about, I said. There has to be a pattern though and we only have black and white.

Well, she said, there's Indians and some of the black is almost white and brown like me.

I looked up the hill, hearing the distant cowbell. Far above us the black-and-white coats of the herd lay like nomadic blankets against the close green hill, and higher still on the edge of the shade two young bulls let fly at one another, head-on into the sun. They must have jarred the hill like thunder.

Hosan Johnny! Hosan Johnny!

Where'd I hear?

He shake his tail, he jar the mountain
He shake his tail, he jar the river.

A long time ago. I could see them back off and paw the earth preparing to let fly again. What was I doing here when there was so much to be done? Movement was everything. I had to move on, westward. How would I plot the scenario with these people? What line would engage them, tie them up in an image that would fascinate them to the maximum? Put money in thy purse, the master said. I needed it.

What time is it? I said.

She looked into the trees. A pink petal clung to her hair. About two-thirty, she said.

Two-thirty, I said. How can you tell without looking at your watch?

By the way the shadows slant against the trees, Mister Movie-Man.

By the shadows? Why don't you use your watch? Doesn't it run?

Sure, it runs, listen. . .

I lowered my head to her blouse, hearing it ticking away. It was a little past two-thirty but she was close enough. She wore some faint scent—a trace of powder. I looked at her. There was no denying the charm of her.

You're right, I said. I wish I could do that. . .

You could if you would stay in one



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town long enough, she said. Don't you have a watch?

I had it stolen back East, I said. I had pawned it in Newark.

LOOK, Donelson said. What's the plot of this thing?

We won't plot it, I said, we'll make it up as we go along. It depends upon how much dough they can raise. I'll think of something. Just shoot anything interesting you see.

Play it by ear, you mean? Karp said. With this little film we have?

That's right. By ear and by nose, by cheek and by jowl, by the foresight and the hindsight, by the foreskin and the rearskin, by the hair of my chinny chin chin and my happy nappy!

We stood in the street beneath a huge cottonwood tree, the camera resting on a tripod near the curb. For once there was no crowd. Sunlight, clear and unhazed, flooded the asphalt, and the odor of apple blossoms drifted to us from a pair of trees in a yard across the street. I could hear the bounce-rattle-scraper as a pair of little girls tossed jacks on the porch of a small house that sat

behind a shallow lawn in which a bed of red poppies made bright red blobs in the sun. Beside me Donelson was rolling a Bull Durham cigarette and I fought my irritation under control. He was arrogant and impatient and he had no discipline. If I didn't guide him every minute he'd waste the film and antagonize the people. I'd look at the day's shooting and there would be nothing more than a jumble of scenes, as though the rambling impressions of an idiot's day had been photographed. With Donelson it was gelly, gelly, gelatine all day long and all images ran to chaos, as though Sherman's army had traumatized his sense of order forever. Once there was a sequence of a man white-washing the walls of the slaughterhouse which stood at the edge of the town near the river, and this followed by a flock of birds strung out skimming over a stretch of field; then came shots of the courthouse clock at those moments when the enormous hands leaped across the gaps of time to take new positions but ever the same on the bird-fouled face, then a reversed flight of birds, and this followed by the clock hands whirl-

ing in swift reversal. Donelson ached to reverse time, I yearned to master it, or so I told myself. I edited a series of shots, killing time. The darkness between the frames longer than what was projected. Once there was a series consisting of a man and a boy and a boar hog, a cat and a great hairy spider—all shot in flight as they sought to escape, to run away from some unseen pursuer. And as I sat in the darkened hotel room watching the rushes, the day's takes, on a portable screen, the man seemed to change into the boy and the boy, changing his form as he ran, becoming swiftly boar and cat and tarantula, moving ever desperately away, until at the end he seemed, this boar-boy-spider-cat, to change into an old man riding serenely on an old white mule as he puffed a corn-cob pipe. I watched it several times and each time I broke into a sweat, shaking as with a fever. Why these images and what was their power?

And Donelson had sung, "Oh, while I sit on my ass on the ass of my ass a curious paradox comes to my mind: While three-fourths of my ass is in front of my ass the whole of my ass is behind." Oh, Donelson, that impossible Donelson. That bad boy with his toy. Sometimes I wondered if any of it had meaning for him beyond the joy of denying the reality of all that which he turned his lenses upon. . . .

From the walk I was listening to the dry, rhythmical, bounce-scraper-scraper-bounce of the knucklebone jacks and ball of the two little girls continuing, when suddenly from behind us a dark old fellow wearing a black Cordoba hat, a blue denim jacket, and a scarf of fuchsia silk wrapped around his throat moved stiffly past on a fine black seven-gaited mare. Small and dry, he sat her with the stylized and monumental dignity of an equestrian statue and in the sun-slant the street became quite dreamlike. His leathery hands held the gathered reins upon the polished horn of a gleaming cowboy saddle and his black, high-heeled boots, topped by the neat, deep cuff of short tan cowhide riding chaps, rested easy and spurless in the stirrups as he moved slowly past as in meditation, his narrowed eyes bright glints in the shadow of his hard-brimmed hat. Donelson started to speak but I silenced him as I watched with whirling mind



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filled with the sight and listening now to the mare's hooves beating with measured gait through the bright suspense of the afternoon—when suddenly a little boy in blue overalls exploded from between two small houses across the street and ran after the horseman, propelled by an explosion of joy.

Hi, there, Mister Love, he yelled. Make her dance, Mister Love, I'll sing the music. Will you, Mister Love? Won't you please, Mister Love? Please, *please*, Mister Love? Clapping his hands as he ran pleading beside the mare's flank.

Dance her, Mister Love, he called, and I'll call the others and we'll all sing for you, Mister Love. . . .

Well, I'll be goddam, Donelson said beside me. What does the little bastard mean, he'll sing the music?

He means what he says, I guess, I said.

And who the hell is that, the Pied Piper on a gaited mare?

The children were singing now, following alongside the arch-necked mare as she moved, the old fellow holding his seat as though he were off somewhere in an elder's chair on a church platform—or on the air itself—watching the kids impassively as he stroked the horse's mane in time to its circus-horse waltzing.

There, I said, now *there's* something we can use. We could use that man, I said.

Donelson looked at me. So write a part for the nag and the kids, he said. You decided all of a sudden to make it a horse opera? He laughed. Now, by God, I've seen everything, he said.

No, I said. I was looking at the children move; some were waltzing in a whirl along the sidewalk, their arms outstretched, shouting and singing. They went past the houses, whirling in circles as they followed the dancing mare. A dog barked along a fence and through it all I could hear the first little boy's pure treble sounding high above the rest.

Suddenly I looked at Donelson—Why the hell aren't you shooting? I said, and saw his mouth drop open in surprise.

No film in the camera, he said. You told me to shoot exteriors of that mansion up in the north section of town. I forgot to reload. Besides, you know we're short of film.

And all this happening right before our eyes, I said.

Maybe we could get them to run it

through some other time, Donelson said. With a few chocolate bars and cones of ice cream you could buy all the pickaninnies in town. Though God knows what the horse and rider would cost. That old bastard looks like weathered iron. D'ya ever see anyone like him?

No, I said, and it'll never happen like this again. How often do I have to tell you that you have to have film in the camera at all times? We don't have the dough to make up everything, we have to snatch whatever passes, and in places like this anything can happen and *does*.

I cursed our luck.

A woman came out to stand on the porch of one of the houses shaking her head and hugging her body as though she were cold.

That Love, that ole hoss and those chiller, she said. They ought to put them all out in the meadow somewhere.

What is his name? I called.

That's ole Love, she said. That's ole Love New.

Then another voice spoke up and I became aware of an old woman sitting in a rocking chair on a porch two houses away down the street.

That's him all right. He's just the devil hisself and he's going to take those chiller off to Torment one of these days. You just mark my words.

She spat into the yard. Calling hisself an Indian and hound-dogging around. The old black tomcat. She spat again and I saw the snuff flash brown through the sunlight then snake across the bare yard to roll into a ball, like quicksilver across the face of a mirror.

Find out where the old fellow lives, I told Donelson. I watched them dancing on past the big cottonwood tree, the glossy horse moving with ceremonial dignity, its neck beautifully arched, and heard the children's bright voices carrying the melody pure and sweet along the air. They were coming to the corner now and suddenly I saw the old man rear the horse, the black Cordoba hat suddenly rising in a brisk salute above his white old head, freezing there for a moment, the mare dancing a two-step on her well-shod hooves. Then, as he put her down, I could hear the hooves ringing out on the road as he took the corner at a gallop, the children stringing after, cheering.

Damn, Donelson said, where do you



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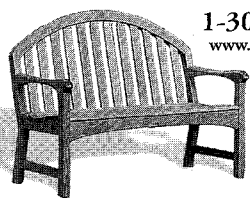
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think he comes from? Is there a circus in town?

Only you, I said. Only us out here without film.

We found Karp with one of his faith who ran a grocery store. They were discussing politics. We drank a soda and went back to the hotel to discuss the film. So how do we start? Donelson said. With a covered wagon? There must be enough of them rotting away in barns around this town.

Or how about an Indian attack? Karp said. Enough of them look like Indians to make things go fairly well. . . .

I was watching the little boy in blue overalls who had been left by the others. He had suddenly become a centaur, his back arched as he waltzed horsestyle to his own *Taaa ta ta ta taaa ta ta*, back between the houses.

What about doing the Boston Tea Party, Donelson said, with these coons acting both the British and the Beantowners. That would be a riot. Make some up as Indians, take the rest and Harvard-up their talk. Even the camera would laugh. Too bad we can't film sound. We could outdo the minstrels 'Lasses White and all. I understand enough of them around here are named Washington and Jefferson and Franklin—put them in powdered wigs, give them red coats, muskets, carpetbags . . .

Some are named Donelson, too, I said, watching the smile die out on his face.

So why not, he said. I'd feel awful bad if my folks didn't get their share.

No, I said, it'll be a modern romance. They'll have dignity and they'll play simple Americans. Good, hardworking, kindly, ambitious people with a little larceny here and there. . . . Let's not expect to take their money and make fools of them while doing it.

What! And how the hell are we going to make these tar babies look like God's fair chosen creatures?

That's your problem, Donelson, I said.

God's going to turn you into a crow for that. . . . Who? You, that's who.

You must think you're a magician, Donelson said. Sometimes I have the feeling that you think you can do anything with a camera. So what's the romance all about? What'll we call it?

"The Taming of the West," I said, or

"The Naming of the Baby," or "Who's Who in Tamarac" . . .

That's enough, Donelson said, I'll get it bye and bye.

SHE smiled, her head back, and I could see the sweet throbbing of her throat. Thinking, *Time—time is all I need to take the mountain*. But now her mind was on the sheerest shadow she hoped to be upon the wall. I looked into the trees, the shadows there. Blossoms . . . fall.

I would like to have seen you when you were a little boy, she said.

That was a long time ago, I said.

Did you have a happy childhood?

I looked into her serious eyes. She was smiling.

It was blissful, I said.

I'm happy. I'm very happy because now there's something sad about you, she said. Something lonesome-like.

Like what?

She turned to rest on her elbow, looking into my eyes.

I don't rightly know, she said. It's something moody, and in the way you look at me sometimes. Do you feel sad?

No, I said, I just have a lot on my mind these days.

Yes, I guess you do, she said. Must be a lot on your hands, too, judging from the way it's wandering.

I removed my hand. I'm sorry.

And is your hand sorry?

Yes.

Then give it here.

I gave it and she looked at me softly, taking my hand and holding it against her breast.

I didn't mean to be mean, she said.

I came close now, breathing the fever, the allure playing about her lips, her quick breath.

Please, I said, *please*. . . .

You'll be good to me? *Really* good? Her eyes were frightened, the whites pale blue.

Oh yes, I said. Oh yes!

HOW she looked when I took her there in the shade, beneath the flowering tree, that warm brown face looking past my head to the sky, her long-lashed eyelids dreamily accepting me, the stranger, and lifelove the sky—What? Who? Fate? All creation, the rejected terms I fled?

Mister Man, she said, you're making me a problem I never had before.

What kind of a problem?

She teased me with an elfish smile, then for a while she seemed to dream.

What is the problem?

Well, I'll tell you the truth, Mister Movie-Man—I'm so country I don't know where the long nose you have is supposed to go. . . .

She laughed then, placing the tips of her fingers there, tweaking my nose. Her own was barely flatter than mine and I was provoked, sweetly. My face suspended in her breath, the moisture came and I went through, upon the sweet soft lips I rested mine. . . .

. . . And I could tell you how I drew her close then and how her surrender was no surrender but something more, a materialization of the heart, the deeper heart that lives in dreams—or once it did—that roams out in the hills among the trees, that sails calm seas in the sunlight; that sings in the stillness of star-cast night. . . . The heart's own that rejoins its excited mate once in a lifetime—like Adam's rib returned transformed and glorious. I can tell you of her black hair waved out upon the grass with leaves in it; the demands of her hand, soft and soothing, with the back of my neck in it; her breath's sweet fever inflaming my face. Even after all these years I can tell you of passion so fierce that it danced with gentleness, and how the whole hill throbbed with silence, the day gathering down, ordered and moving radiant beneath the firm pumping of our enraptured thighs, I can tell you, tell you how I became she and she me with no questions asked and no battle fought. We grasped the secret of that moment and it was and it was enough. I can tell you as though it were only an hour past, of her feel within my arms, a girlwoman soft and yielding. Innocent, unashamed, yet possessing the necessary knowledge. How I was at rest then, enclosed in peace, obsessionless, and accepting a definition for once and for once happy. How I kissed her eyes, pushed back the hair from her smooth forehead, held that face between my palms as I tried to read the mystery of myself within her eyes. Spoke words into her ear of which only then I was capable now the likes of me could say, I love, I love . . . And having loved moved on. ♦

April 15th. Tax Day.

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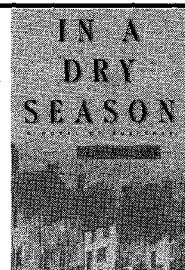
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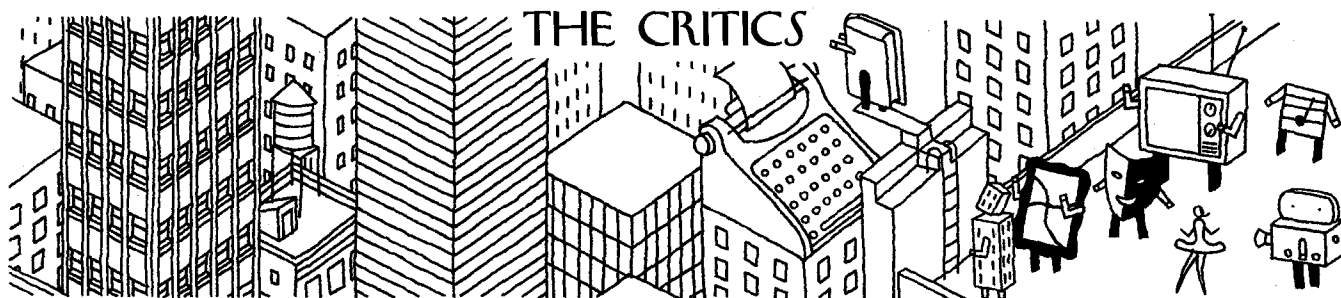
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A CRITIC AT LARGE

BREAKING THE WAVES

Into the frozen unknown with Sir Ernest Shackleton.

BY ANTHONY LANE

IF you happen to find yourself on the Upper West Side this month with an hour to kill, you should go and see a boat. She is called the James Caird, and she was built in 1914 of Baltic pine, American elm, and British oak—an improbably diplomatic combination. She measures twenty-three feet four inches from bow to stern and six feet nine inches across, and, believe me, the more you know about her the smaller that seems. The best way to describe her, perhaps, and the reason that she is now being accorded such glory, is that she is the antithesis of the Titanic: in place of that unwieldy leviathan, primed by human pride and brought low by a single berg, the James Caird was powered by little more than ingenuity and grit, and she resolutely refused to sink. The canvas that covered her makeshift deck had to be thawed over a fire of seal blubber before it could be stitched, and the needles could be pulled through only with pincers. In 1916, six men climbed into the boat and sailed eight hundred miles in sixteen days, through the worst seas in the world, “a seething chaos of tortured water,” from Elephant Island, which lies off the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, to the barren haven of South Georgia.

The James Caird, which began life as a whaler on the deck of the three-hundred-ton *Endurance*, is the centerpiece of an exhibition running at the American Museum of Natural History from April 10th to October 11th.

The show is entitled “The Endurance: Shackleton’s Legendary Antarctic Expedition,” and it represents a further staging post on the startling progress of Sir Ernest Shackleton; seventy-seven years after his death, he is becoming almost as lionized as he was at the summit of his living fame. When he announced, in December, 1913, that he would lead a team of men across the polar continent, the world was all ears. The South Pole had been reached by Roald Amundsen in 1911, and—more stirringly to British hearts, which always thump harder at the sight of romantic failure—had been reached too late by Captain Robert Scott. But no one had travelled from sea to sea, and Shackleton’s declaration of intent put him in the headlines. At the Scott Polar Research Institute, in Cambridge, England, a few weeks ago, I found the front page of the London *Daily Mirror*, dated the final day of 1913. Most of it consists of a photograph of Shackleton, alone in Oxford Street. Everyone else is wearing hats and carrying umbrellas; he stands coatless in the cold (close to tropical, by his standards) in the dying hours of the year, looking lost. That his mind must be elsewhere is obvious to the point of embarrassment. At the top, above the paper’s masthead, a teaser directs us to a story on pages 8 and 9: “BIG GAME HUNTING TO CURE HEARTACHE.” On the same day, across the Atlantic, the *Times* took the opportunity to wish Sir Ernest godspeed and to muse on the curious mentality of

polar explorers: “Their very sufferings, apparently, are joys in memory, for they seek them again and again.”

This was very acute, and it remains so. Even a cursory glide through the wide and growing literature of Antarctica should be enough to deafen you with the call of the wild, the unfailing two-tone protestation of the polar addict: It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, and you should have seen my toes. Seasoned armchair travellers can get much the same effect, without the bother of frostbite; sit down and open Shackleton’s “South”—published in 1919, and still best read in the course of a single, stormy night—and you will be gripped both by an intense gratitude that you were not forced to experience what he did, and by a rack-ing frustration that you will never get the chance to try. Next to the mountainous risks with which he lived, you tend to feel safe but dead.

There are few emotions more profitable than principled envy, and that may be why Caroline Alexander’s “The Endurance” (Knopf, \$29.95) has been such a gratifying hit. Her brisk and well-turned account of Shackleton’s voyage—written to accompany the exhibition, of which Alexander herself is the curator—has been reprinted several times and has sold close to two hundred thousand copies since it came out in November, suggesting a hitherto unsuspected desire on the part of ordinary Americans to eat dog food and frier seal just south of the sixty-sixth parallel. The onset of Shackleton fever was predicted in the *Wall Street Journal* last spring, but no one could have guessed precisely how infectious it would be; the epic of the *Endurance* is one that need to be retold for every generation, but this generation, for reasons not altogether fathomable, has fallen for him with chronic neediness. Hollywood, c

course, is on the case, with Wolfgang Petersen, who made "Das Boot," lined up to direct; it should be impossible to go wrong with a story of such natural shape and momentum, but I'm sure that the studio executives will spare no effort to mess things up. Even now, they must be fretting over the question of finding a part for Gwyneth Paltrow. It is true that the skipper of the *Endurance* noted what he called the "sex jealousy" of bull elephant seals, but that, I regret to announce, is the limit of the love interest. We will have to make do with courage, comradeship, snow blindness, and special effects.

THE *Endurance* left England on August 8, 1914; the date insured, in more ways than one, that this would be the last adventure of its kind. War had been declared days before, and Shackleton, having immediately offered both his ship and his men for active service, was told to continue as he had planned. He himself joined the *Endurance* at Buenos Aires, and, with a

complement of twenty-seven men and sixty-nine dogs under his command, he reached South Georgia on November 5th. Along the way, the crew had grown by one—a Welsh stowaway named Perce Blackborow. Legend has it that Shackleton confronted him with this threat: "Do you know that on these expeditions we often get very hungry, and if there is a stowaway available he is the first to be eaten?" A photograph shows Blackborow with a toothy grin and the ship's cat—a male tabby named Mrs. Chippy—perched on his shoulder like a pirate's parrot.

On New Year's Eve, 1914, a year since he had stood bemused in Oxford Street, Shackleton entered the even less hospitable terrain of the Antarctic Circle. A little more than two weeks later, his ship was stuck fast among the floes of the Weddell Sea: she would never sail freely again. She was no longer a vessel but a floating home, and Shackleton's overriding duty was to make sure that she would not turn into a tomb. His quest to traverse the continent was

abandoned. As the months of imprisonment wore on, and the men quit the ship to pitch camp nearby, the true thrust of Shackleton's character was revealed. According to his granddaughter, Alexandra Shackleton, he rated as the most necessary virtue neither dexterity nor bravado, nor even the endurance that was enshrined in his family motto and bestowed upon his ship, but optimism. "A man must shape himself to a new mark directly the old one goes to ground," he wrote in "South." In this case, the ground was the ice that squeezed and crunched the *Endurance* and, on November 21, 1915, finally swallowed her. The prospects of survival were so slim that, in company at least, Shackleton gave himself no option but to ignore them entirely.

In April, 1916, having shot the last of the dogs and eaten the more tender ones, Shackleton's men cast off in three small boats, among them the James Caird, in search of land. It is from this point that the story passes beyond our normal reckoning and heads for the



Frank Wild, right, with Shackleton in 1922. He was both a tough guy and a sensitive soul, before those two categories diverged.

improbability of myth. The journey to Elephant Island, their hastily agreed-upon destination outside the pack ice, took seven days. "Rest was not for us," wrote Shackleton, whose tongue grew so swollen with thirst that his orders had to be whispered. Frank Worsley, formerly the captain of the *Endurance*, took the tiller of one boat, the *Dudley Docker*; by the time he was relieved, he had steered for eighteen hours and had not slept for ninety. Once on terra firma, which was little more than an inhospitable chunk of wasteland, the crew slept. "I decided not to share with the men the knowledge of the uncertainties of our situation until they had enjoyed the full sweetness of rest," Shackleton wrote. His next plan was ludicrous. He would leave his unflappable deputy, Frank Wild, in charge of a luxurious camp: twenty-two men huddled under a pair of upturned boats for four and a half months, wreathed in blubber soot, venturing forth occasionally to contend with flying sheets of ice the size of windowpanes. That was nothing: Shackleton himself would take five men in the *James Caird*, sail eight hundred miles, walk across an island that was universally hailed as impassable, get help, find another ship, break back through the ice to rescue his companions on Elephant Island, and return them all intact to England in time to go to war. And that is what he did.

WE are fortunate to have a mass of evidence for the *Endurance* expedition, and for the progress of its fate, since without proper documentation the whole thing would have veered toward the tall tale. Many of the men kept journals, and Shackleton was not alone in working his memories up into a book; Frank Worsley's "*Endurance: An Epic of Polar Adventure*" is to be republished this month (Norton; \$25.95). Above all, there was the Australian photographer Frank Hurley, who captured so much of the action, and the eeriness of the inaction, on film. He was also the most professionally ambitious—as opposed to morally determined—member of the team. It was hoped that the rights to his work could redeem some of the expedition's costs; he shot movie footage as well as stills, and the resulting film was indeed screened to great acclaim on his return.

Hurley was "a warrior with his camera," wrote one of the crew in a letter home, and the photographer was quick to see his chance when two men fell overboard into the Antarctic surf. Shackleton was not amused by such opportunism: "I firmly believe that he would have liked the two unfortunate men to remain in the water until he could get a 'snap' at close quarters."

To be fair, Hurley himself was bold and mulish enough to take a similar plunge. As her crew divested the sinking *Endurance* of all personal possessions, he stripped to the waist, dived into mushy ice, and retrieved his negatives, saving a hundred and twenty. Many of these were freshly printed for Caroline Alexander's book, and for the American Museum of Natural History; the crispness and clarity are like a sharp blast of polar air in your face. Most appear to have been taken last week rather than eighty-five years ago; the ice flowers that coat the Weddell Sea look as if you could reach out and pick them. Beyond their severe beauty, however, Hurley's images embody the essential balance of the story: against the melancholy sight of the *Endurance* keeling over and dwindling into a tangle of rigging, we can set his portraits of the men and see in their expressions the reason they did not go down with their ship. Look at the Churchillian jut of Shackleton's jaw and the unexpected mildness of his gaze; at the relaxed pose of the pipe-smoking Frank Wild and the boyish, bespectacled features of Jimmy James, the young Cambridge physicist; and, above all, at the deep-seamed face of Tom Crean, the Irishman who had already been South twice with Captain Scott. As Caroline Alexander neatly puts it, "Crean was perhaps as close as one can come to being indestructible." He is reported to have died in 1938, but that sounds unlikely.

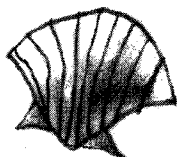
It was Crean whom Shackleton picked to accompany him and Worsley across South Georgia. They left three rattled shipmates, with the *James Caird*, on the western coast of the island, and set off across "a chaos of crumpled ice," with neither tent nor sleeping bags. Each man kept his rations in a sock; screws were pulled from the boat and attached to the soles of their boots, for a better grip on the ice. These three were the last gasp, and the

only hope, of the *Endurance* expedition. If they failed—and Shackleton, at one point, had to shake his two companions awake, "for sleep under such conditions merges into death"—none of their twenty-five companions, either from the *James Caird* or back on Elephant Island, would be found alive, or even found at all. On the first night of their thirty-six-hour march, they were struck silent upon a peak in South Georgia, in what even their leader admitted was a testing predicament. Behind them lay a bank of gathering sea fog; ahead and below was what Worsley called "impenetrable gloom." Shackleton said, "Let's slide." They sat on coiled rope, "locked together as one man," as if on a toboggan, and went "shooting down the side of an almost precipitous mountain at nearly a mile a minute." All three, despite their situation, found themselves yelling with glee; at the bottom, they shook hands. What matters here is not just the ability to have fun in the face of the frozen unknown but the fact that a knight of the realm, educated privately and toasted in London drawing rooms, should have held on for dear life to an Irish farm boy who never went beyond primary school. Shackleton was a firm leader, but there was not an ounce of snobbery in him; indeed, you almost sense that he sailed to the ends of the earth to escape the confines and fripperies of society. When it was discovered that not enough good sleeping bags had been rescued from the *Endurance* to go around, lots were drawn, but somehow Shackleton saw to it that the reindeer-fur ones went to the men and that the officers had to make do with wool. It was like Wellington worrying over the condition of his soldiers' boots.

THIS could explain some of America's fascination with the Shackleton legend. He may be an example of strong command—the chief global strategist of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, Barton Biggs, recently likened him to "a good but manic investment manager who is bearish in a bull market"—but in historical terms he allows us the rare liberty of revering an imperial achievement without getting cluttered up by the impediments of imperial guilt. Not only did Shackleton fail t

subdue any indigenous peoples; he even expressed remorse at having to kill young albatrosses for a stew: "Our hunger knew no law." He took with him a Bible inscribed on the flyleaf by Queen Alexandra, plus a copy of Browning; our tedious modern division between the tough guy and the sensitive soul was not yet in place. Shackleton—"the frustrated poet" to his biographer, "a born poet" in the eyes of Frank Hurley—wrote a fair amount of verse, and once declaimed some of it to a fellow-officer in Russia during the war, adding that it was by someone named Shackleton. "That explorer-man?" said the officer. "I never knew he was a poet!" Shackleton replied, "Then why the devil did you think he became an explorer?"

It is true that Shackleton claimed various featureless wastes for King and Country, but that counted for as much as the observation, by Leonard Hussey, his onboard meteorologist, that a bad winter in the Weddell Sea "is a sure precursor of a drought over the maize and cereal bearing area of Argentina three and a half years later." That's useful to know, but Shackleton's motives went even higher than maize, and his endeavors—his collected works, so to speak—offer a rebuke to virtually every standard by which we now choose to conduct our lives. In the words of his granddaughter, the story of the *Endurance* is a demonstration of "restful absolutes": instead of urban infestation, a thousand miles of pure nothingness; instead of solo self-advancement, a reflex attachment to those in your care; instead of rampant accumulation, the intricate art of making do—an art that resurfaced recently in "Apollo 13," with its filtration system made from space junk. "Lamps were fashioned out of sardine tins, with bits of surgical bandage for wicks," Shackleton recalled. At his old school, Dulwich College, I came across a menu for his farewell dinner, on March 31, 1914. It runs to twelve courses, including Mousse du Homard à la Shackleton and Cerises à l'Arctique. Two years later, he was sucking a lump of ice chipped from the Dudley Docker. At the moment when he finally hove in sight of Elephant Island to help the stranded men, their commander, Frank Wild, was serving soup—"particularly



good that day, consisting of boiled seals' backbone, limpets, and seaweed." Try asking for that at Balthazar.

There was one man who made a fuss about such privations. Captain Thomas Orde-Lees was the skiing expert and resident smart-ass: he resented the vulgar manners of the men, considered floor-scrubbing unfair "for people who have been brought up in refinement," and, worst of all, thought they were all going to die. His diary scorns the "fatuous optimists." According to Shackleton's biographer, Roland Huntford, there were serious discussions on Elephant Island as to who should be sacrificed and consumed when the food ran out: "Orde-Lees was first choice." The awful thing is that he sounds like most of us; we, too, would have been skinned and popped into the pot. His constant half smile infuriated the others, who were trying to subsist in one of the last irony-free zones of the twentieth century, and who preferred to challenge their predicament with the uncomplicated humor that accompanies—and assists—the will to live. It may sound ungracious for us to laugh at the extremity of their exploits, but it is worth recalling that, by and large, those performing the heroics had exactly the same reaction. When the James Caird landed on South Georgia, the sailors stumbled ashore and sought refuge in a cave, whose entrance was guarded by fifteen-foot icicles; just to add to the fun, these would drop at random during the night. The men were too enfeebled by the voyage to drag the boat from the water; finally, they renounced any hope of sleep and spent most of the night clinging to the painter, so that the James Caird would not be swept away. Worsley takes up the story:

When our spirits were almost down to zero Shackleton got a laugh out of us by saying, with the most elegant formality, "I do hope that you are all enjoying my little party."

It would be simple to ascribe this nonchalance to a surplus of British backbone. Yet, as Caroline Alexander said to me, "those mannerisms were not affectations but survival tactics." To play the game and show good form were the only means by which any of Shackleton's men had a hope of pulling through.

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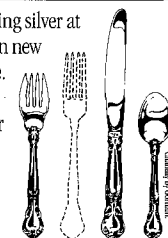
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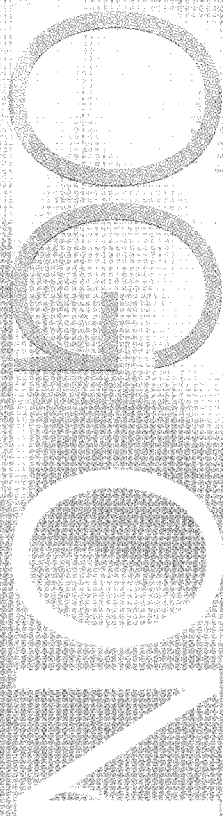
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That handshake at the foot of the South Georgia slope was all the more potent because the ordeal was not yet done—the three men still had to hook a rope to the top of a freezing waterfall and lower themselves to the base. As they approached the Norwegian whalers' base at Stromness, they tried to smarten themselves up, in case there were women present. When they finally arrived, nobody recognized them. Shackleton said, "My name is Shackleton." The manager shook hands and led them inside; that, at any rate, is the version of events in Shackleton's "South." Another recollection comes from an elderly whaler standing nearby:

Manager say: "Who the *hell* are you?" and terrible bearded man in the centre of the three say very quietly: "My name is Shackleton." Me—I turn away and weep.

In these two complementary accounts we touch the truth of the Endurance expedition. One looks back to the past, to a culture of restraint, and of feats so surreally impressive that they can be completed, and acknowledged, only in decorum; the other peers forward, to all the tears to come. Shackleton asked the manager when the war had ended. "The war is not over," came the reply. "Millions are being killed. Europe is mad. The world is mad." So much for the return to civilization. I am surprised that Shackleton didn't turn around and head back the way he had come.

THE legacy of the terrible bearded man goes further than his writings, or his discoveries, or Hurley's visual records of the voyage; what Shackleton handed down was the urge to go South—to catch fire at a vision of the ice. The flame seems to be strengthening by the year; I went recently to a reception given by the James Caird Society in Dulwich, where the boat normally lives, and entered a room humming with explorers, amateur and professional, and polar converts. There, as elsewhere, I couldn't find anyone who had been to the Antarctic just once. If you go, it seems, you go again, and you keep on going; think of a white, powdery drug stretching for five and a half million square miles. Even as a reader, you grow avid for anecdote; I myself am partial to the tale of the Russian doctor who was forced, in 1961, to remove his own appendix, there being

no one else around in the Antarctic to do the job. Wherever you look, there are reports of sensory deprivation, vertiginous solitude, and rushes of wonder; unlike other outposts of the world, the poles have not substantially changed their story for a hundred years. It is easy to forget that the Endurance set sail within living memory, and I was taken aback on being introduced to James Blackborow—the son of Shackleton's stowaway, and a sailor himself. He seems to have inherited his father's taste for adventure: "I suffer," he announced, "from what I call youth deficiency."

Shackleton had the same complaint. After the war, in which he and many of his fellow-explorers saw action, his restlessness grew worse—"Shackleton sitting still and doing nothing wasn't Shackleton at all," said one of his ship's surgeons—and in 1921 he issued a call to old companions from the Endurance. Eight heeded it, and the Quest headed off, with no particular purpose, for South Georgia. There is a wonderful photograph of Wild and Shackleton, taken on board. Wild has his jacket buttoned up and his pipe lit, but his pants are rolled up and the feet that he braces against the deck are bare, as if he were a child at play. Shackleton sits wearing one of his favorite slouch hats, wholly at ease; the deck tilts at an alarming angle, and you can see the muscled swell of the sea behind them, but the two mer look more comfortable than most people do on dry land. Twelve days after the picture was taken, Ernest Shackleton died of a heart attack on the Quest one contributing factor, in the words of the postmortem, was "overstrain during a period of debility." That's one way of looking at it. For him, there was no masochism in the urge to explore. Adventure had functioned neither as therapy nor as conquest, and no one who knows the tale of the Endurance could for a second accuse him of recklessness let alone of a rage for honor; he simply upended our traditions of happiness. To relinquish the firm footing of home and the handholds of material possession—all the means by which we guarantee our capacity to prosper—was for him a chance to begin afresh on a tabula rasa, the endless white slate of the South. There he discovered not just friendships, and what we like to think

of as management skills, but something far more primitive: the deep contentments of desolation. They carry only the barest message for modern minds; according to taste, you will either deem Shackleton's fixation perverse or, more charitably, pinpoint his enterprise with-

in a breath of the spiritual. "We had pierced the veneer of outside things," he wrote. "We had seen God in His splendours, heard the text that Nature renders." He was buried, according to the wishes of his widow, on South Georgia. The ice had claimed him after all. ♦

THE THEATRE

THE BAYJAYSUS FACTOR

The haunted Celtic stammer of Conor McPherson's "The Weir."

BY JOHN LAHR



AM I the only person who is weary of the blathering stage Irishman—that chain-smoking, Guinness-swilling, foul-“feckin”-mouthed, dim bundle of bluff and gloom and goodness? The intemperate thought came to me at a becalmed moment in Conor McPherson's award-winning “The Weir” (at the Walter Kerr), which takes place in the musty chill of a backwater Irish pub where a handful of habitués chew the cud of their solitude, spinning ghostly yarns that fill the air with glimmers of fear and resignation. “The Weir” is a gentle, well-written series of anecdotes, and it has a bittersweet charm; the question is about its reputed depths.

In the play's first beats, Jack (the raggadocio Jim Norton) enters the pub and goes to pull himself a pint only to have nothing come out of the tap. Here in this threadbare place nothing flows freely; expectation—and not just the beer—has more or less dried up. Making do is a destiny; Jack mournfully settles for bottled beer. Perhaps the most compelling part of Ian Rickson's expertly managed production is the bar's crepuscular atmosphere. The wind thumps and whistles outside the room. “It's like someone singing,” Jack says at one point. “Singing in under the

door at you.” If the wind has a song, it's a harsh, unrelenting one, which makes the pub feel like an oasis. In the left-hand corner, a potbellied stove, intermittently fed with peat by the saturnine publican, Brendan (Brendan Coyle), fills the place with a comforting, earthy musk. In the play's transfer from Lon-



A Dubliner comes to the local snug: Michelle Fairley as Valerie, the mysterious visitor with a tale to tell.

don (where I first saw it) to New York, Rae Smith's brooding set has been adapted to the large Broadway proscenium, and the wooden bar, which dominates the room, now seems big enough for all of Dodge City to belly up to. This gargantuan space slightly skews the reality of McPherson's world. The place is supposed to be, according to the stage directions, “a small rural bar,” but what is intended as a snug is turned into a kind of cavern, diminishing the bar's crucial sense of containment and leaching tension from the intimate exchanges, which often take place across the stage at tables and chairs set forty feet apart.

Into this den McPherson introduces what the rural Irish piquantly call a “blow-in”: a mysterious Dubliner, Valerie (Michelle Fairley), who has rented a nearby house—it turns out to be haunted—from one of the better-heeled regulars, Finbar (Dermot Crowley). When Jack hears that Finbar, a married man, is bringing Valerie to the pub, he immediately goes on the defensive. “There's you and me, and the Jimmy fella, the muggins's, the single fellas. And he's the married fella,” Jack says to Brendan. “And he's going ‘Look at this! There's obviously something the fuck wrong with yous. Yous are single and you get a woman near this place. And look at me.’” The storytelling begins in this competitive spirit: an attempt to wow, and even woo, the female newcomer. The Irishmen have no psychological vocabulary; they laugh away the erratic behavior—the terrors and visions—of the people they describe, calling them “headbangers” and “loolahs.” But each story that's told sketchily telegraphs the narrator's own demons. (“We're afraid of ourselves,”

McPherson says in an *American Theatre* interview. “So we sort of project it out there. You know, a little devil on one shoulder and an angel on the other.”)

The yarns we hear are about fairy paths, apparitions, the dead walking among the living. They're told to show off the teller as much as the tale, with an emphasis on exaggeration, not on scaring. But the faith of the speakers in a numinous world coaxes Valerie out of her reticence. “Something happened to me,” she says, and describes a haunting of an altogether different kind: the death of her daughter at the age of five in a swimming-pool acci-

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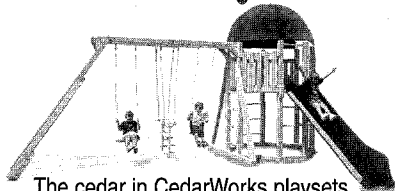
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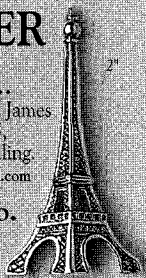
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dent. Later, she claims to have heard her daughter's voice on the telephone. "She wanted me to come and collect her," Valerie explains. "I just said, 'Where are you?' And she said she thought she was at Nana's. . . I dropped the phone and I ran out to the car in just a T-shirt I slept in. . . I knew she wasn't going to be there. I knew she was gone. But to think wherever she was . . . that . . . And there was nothing I could do about it." The death of a child is a horror so profound that it inevitably arrests an audience's attention; McPherson plays this manipulative card to strong effect. But it's here, at the evening's most emotional moment, that the play is at its most glib and superficial.

Anyone who has lived through a child's death (I have) knows that it is a grief beyond words; dramatists like McPherson, who is now twenty-seven, fondly imagine otherwise. Valerie is in retreat from her despair and has hidden herself away in the country for "peace and quiet," yet she unburdens herself uninterrupted for about seven minutes to a roomful of strangers. "It's nice just to be here and . . . hear what you were saying," she says at the end of her riff. "I know I'm not crazy." Given the immensity of her loss and her own tentative nature, her monologue is dramatically suspect; the moment is meant to show the blessings

of community, but it's sentimental, bogus, and unearned.

By contrast, in the play's last—and best—aria, Jack, who is in his fifties, tells of his lost young love and of being hard-shouldered by her when he cockily turned up at her wedding. His story has the sting of real regret, and unlike most of the other narratives it builds to a revelation of character. "She just looked at me like I was only another guest at the wedding," he says. "And that was that. And the future was ahead of me. Years and years of it. I could feel it coming. . . But I left the church like a little boy. And I walked away. I couldn't go to the reception. I just kept walking." He continues, "And I'll tell you—there's not one morning I don't wake up with her name in the room." At the end of the tale, Jack adds, "That wasn't a ghostly story. Anyway. At least, ha?" Of course, it was. Jack is a kind of ghost of his old self. "Goodness wears off," he tells Valerie about aging. "And it just gets easier to be a contrary bollocks." By the end of the evening McPherson, who has an informed heart and an unerring ear, manages to engineer a sense of fellowship in the group; but, with the exception of Jack the characters as individuals are overlooked amid the pyrotechnics of their speech. For all the well-crafted talk and the well-observed bonhomie, "The Weir" is finally a shaggy bog story.

BOOKS

POST MODERNISM

Adventures in etiquette.

BY JULIAN BARNES



MY most recent trip to the States began with the traditional New York welcome. As the cab pulled away from the terminal at Kennedy and the safety locks clunked alarmingly, the driver tuned his radio to one of those Bible-reading stations. For some reason, they rarely dispense meek-and-mild, love-thy-neighbor advice but revel in all the porno stuff from the rear booths of

the Apocrypha. As we passed appropriately close to that cemetery whose vastness seems almost an argument for the Resurrection, I was obliged to listen to a version of Christianity which was part Hieronymus Bosch, part metaphysical free market: how the righteous winners would all get condos in the sky while those of unsatisfactory character would be roasted like peppers on a grill. To divert encroaching paranoia, I read the

Port Authority's yellow leaflet in all its languages and then the various instructions in the cab itself. I was apparently entitled to a quiet, radio-free environment. I was also informed that tipping was optional. Putting these two items together, I decided to reward the driver not with the inflated thank you I would normally proffer for not having murdered me en route but with the same percentage as in London: three dollars on a thirty-dollar fare. The driver turned and fixed me with a stare that he clearly reserved for the unrighteous: "The tip from the airport is five dollars." I gazed at him mutely, wondering if I should refer him to the listed regulations. "The tip from the airport is five dollars," he repeated, his tone invoking the Day of Judgment. He won.

The next morning, at the offices of *The New Yorker*, I consulted Emily Post—or, at least, the sixteenth edition of her "Etiquette" (HarperCollins; \$35), updated by Peggy Post (a Post by marriage, not by blood, if these things matter) "to take us into the next century." The cabbie was, if anything, being modest: twenty per cent is what you tip, and I was just another cheap limey who should have known better. On the other hand, what about the cabbie? Mrs. Post has no advice on drivers' etiquette. Her book is full of counsel about taking a cab ("Those desiring a taxi . . . wait in line and it is extremely rude to push ahead or assume you are in a greater hurry than anyone else, unless you have an extreme medical emergency") but is silent about driving one. Similarly, she will instruct you on correct demeanor in various types of temple, mosque, and church (slacks but not jeans or shorts when you are on Catholic territory), and she lists appropriate greetings for assorted holy days, yet she fails to discourage the devout from thrusting unwanted doctrine down the ears of a guest. A paying guest, on this occasion.

Sensitized by all this, I spent an etiquette-aware ten days in your country. I can't say I got many things right. For instance, when riding an elevator, I have a habit—I know, it's awful, I am trying to do better, and, frankly, I blame my mother—of standing aside to let women get out first. Wrong, wrong, wrong: not on feminist grounds (the Post world is the Pre world in this respect) but because I have made the mistake of



What to do when a pig ransacks your luggage? On such crucial matters, Post is mute.

treating the elevator door as—well, a door. My stab at courtesy merely clogs the exiting flow, and is probably also to be condemned as self-advertising.

At least, it didn't rain while I was in New York. Did you know that it is always the taller person who should carry the umbrella—regardless of whose umbrella it is, and regardless of sex? This seemingly sensible diktat creates as many problems as it solves. More than a few tall women might not like the idea of a five-foot-ten-inch male pointing out that actually they're an inch higher off the ground and would they kindly tote that *parapluie*? And how about if power is involved, as when the midget tycoon is squiring his supermodel girlfriend? (I suppose the answer to that comes not from the etiquette book but from common sense: midget tycoons don't walk in the rain, they have limos.)

I called a literary friend, whose answering machine opened up with a

sentence from Proust. (*Wrong!* "It is extremely annoying to call someone and have to listen to the theme song from their favorite show or a long and rambling 'cute' message before the beep indicates they may leave their message.") I called another friend, then changed my mind and put the phone down. (*Wrong!* "Don't hang up before letting the telephone ring at least six times"—which sounds like that rule about how many mastications before swallowing.) My restaurant misdemeanors were too numerous to mention, but to judge from the illustration on page 239, I commit three separate solecisms every time I maneuver peas onto my fork.

At the curbside check-in for my flight down to Tennessee, the woman in front of me tipped the agent a dollar. I'd never noticed this gesture before, and I naturally followed suit, though it was more a superstitious act (a dollar

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BRIEFLY NOTED

might stop my case from disappearing) than an imitation of what I took to be good manners. Post offers no enlightenment on this moment of social exchange, and although she has various instructions about the distribution of gratuities, this is generally an area where instinct consistently overrides social rule. Research done fifteen years ago into American tipping habits in restaurants found that generosity depended less on the quality of service and of food than on a desire to impress the waiter; further, that if a waitress touched a diner when asking how the meal had been, the tip percentage was raised from eleven to fourteen per cent; further, that by putting a smiley face on the bill a waitress increased her tip; further still, that by putting a smiley face on the bill a waiter decreased his. Now, that last part I thoroughly understand.

In Tennessee, I was staying with old friends, to one of whose children I am godfather; it was a house I knew well, an easy place to stay in, with a vibrant tranquillity. But even such a place should be yellow-stickered with Post-it notes—for the hosts as well as for the guests. Thus, did they behave properly when, one evening, I qualified for the Postly description of “a drunken guest”? Not at all: they gave me even more to drink. When I offered to go outside to smoke, they insisted that I stay indoors, because of the cold. I didn’t argue much, but politely obeyed. (*Wrong!* Even if [your host] encourages you to stay inside, don’t.) There were dilemmas, too, over godparental duties. If you bring your four-year-old goddaughter a present, should you do the same for her twin brother? Common sense and Post confirm that you should, lest the mite feel neglected. But does this mean you have to go on bringing him presents until he’s twenty-one, in which case you might as well sign him up as a godson? No help from Post on when to let the gift-giving tail off.) Then there was the usual stuff about how to leave the bed, and so on.

Still, it was the pig that taxed my guestliness the hardest. My friends, you see, have this pig, house-trained and house-savvy. It is a nice enough pig. One morning, we spent a couple of hours in each other’s company, I in an armchair reading Edith Wharton, and

COLLECTED POEMS: 1930-83, by Josephine Miles (University of Illinois; \$34.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper). This ample volume illuminates the singularity of the author’s eccentric, confiding voice. Whether she is writing about the perfect shoe salesman or the presence of evil in the natural world, Miles pries into the recesses of daily experience with the curiosity of a wise child, coaxing out the light ironies within. “Mother said to call her if the H-bomb exploded,” one typically wry poem begins. While Miles’s quirky colloquialism influenced the Beat poets, the range of agile, knowing lyrics collected here—from satire to metaphysical abstraction—is a testament to the broader accomplishment of her work.

FREDY NEPTUNE, by Les Murray (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; \$27.50). The eponymous hero of Murray’s first verse novel wants only to live a quiet life in rural Australia, but he can’t seem to escape the upheaval of the first half of the twentieth century; his efforts to get home and stay home are continually thwarted, by missions, wars, disease, and the law. After Fredy contracts leprosy, his sense of touch evaporates (“Your skin is deaf, then?” asks one character), but his sense of justice remains, making him into a sort of shy, blue-collar Superman. He relates his travels—to Cairo and Hollywood and many points in between—in the willfully idiosyncratic voice of Murray’s previous books, its working-class lyricism undiminished in two hundred and fifty-three pages. You can rely on the unexpected to keep happening here, and to always be exhilarating.

SHELMALIER, by Medbh McGuckian (Wake Forest; \$17.95 cloth, \$11.95 paper). In her ninth book, this Northern Irish poet envelops the reader in a private landscape of striking intensity. Whatever the subject—the Irish rebellion of 1798 (from which the book takes its title), the intricacies of the orchid, or the hardship of losing a lover—McGuckian’s lush verse resists simple resolutions, preferring to invoke the paradoxes of inner life. “When sleep flings its inkstand, everything is a few degrees clearer,” she writes. Her dreamlike poems underscore the notion that one finds clarity by repeatedly stepping outside one’s usual frame of reference.

THE RED LEAVES OF NIGHT, by David St. John (HarperFlamingo; \$23). Expressive, gestural, and image-laden, St. John’s lines fairly hum with the pleasure of their own making. In this fine new collection, beauty is the poet’s subject—and the poems themselves become a kind of sensuous portraiture, like “the small photo album / Filled entirely with postcards of nudes.” But these portraits are not merely beautiful; the nude and the naked uneasily share the page, where sculptures are “More miraculous (not to mention immortal) / In their marble flesh than we, who, of course, / Exhausted and sleepless and spent, collapsed into / That coma of the loved & wounded.”

THE OLDEST MAP WITH THE NAME AMERICA, by Lucia Perillo (Random House; \$19.95). Phone sex and Quattrocento painting, special effects and cancer treatments, landfills and the “extravagant diameter” of Sophia Loren’s breast on-screen: no subject, it seems, is too mundane or too exotic for Perillo’s engaging poems. Her tone is conversational throughout the book, belying the discipline of her sustained, often metaphysical examinations of the “muckheap the world is.” With its combination of the eerie and the commonplace, her art resembles that of Edward Hopper, whom she praises for painting women in “postures anyone could hold.”

THIS SCRIBE, MY HAND, by Ben Belitt (Louisiana State; \$26.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper). The poems in this collection have been chosen by Belitt himself from his carefully meditated and distinguished career, and they take the language into some very deep and strange places. As one would expect from a volume whose earliest selections were published when Hoover was President, the work has range and historical resonance. What’s surprising, though, is how consistent and unified Belitt has been—in form, in his self’s “search of its personal legend,” and in his visionary concerns. While the poems are bursting with information, they respond not to the vagaries of the world but to an inner atmosphere untouched by time. They seem as fresh as if they had been written yesterday.

DAILIES & RUSHES, by Susan Kinsolving (Grove; \$13 paper). Some of the poems in Kinsolving’s first full-length collection display an unemphatic lyricism that can accommodate everything from an image of a sleeping child to a recipe for a better world. Others—especially the ones that take place within the confines of a hospital—are grand and almost terrifying. They evoke with great immediacy and intellectual toughness those threatening forces which only toughness will allow us to survive.

THE CONSTRUCTOR, by John Koethe (HarperFlamingo; \$20). Koethe, who is a professor of philosophy, writes mainly about what he calls “the unclarity of real life and the dead certainty / Of abstraction.” His poetry is cut from the same cloth as Wallace Stevens’s, but he is less appealing when he dons Stevens’s coat (as in the opening poem, entitled “Sunday Evening”) than when his forefather’s presence, like a fine lining, is felt but not seen. Despite Koethe’s dense convolutions, there is pathos in his struggle, as when he writes, “I wish there were a form of feeling with the elementary / Feeling of the body, eloquent and ample in its unawareness.” In the best poems here abstraction gives way to a lucidity—occasionally, even, a happiness—that is more powerful for having been earned the hard way.

the pig napping on the sofa. Its manners on this occasion were impeccable.

But it was, and remains, a pig. On the second day, I went to my room and noticed the contents of my suitcase strewn across the floor in a fashion untypical of me, even in my Drunken Guest mode. I admit that I suspected my goddaughter, and then her dinosaur-obsessed brother, who had recently learned that "dinosaurs come from England" and was perhaps seeking evidence. However, no four-year-old would have found my newly bought jar of Excedrin, ripped off its packaging, sent the circular cap protector spinning, and chomped the plastic bottle into an unpharmaceutical, if just about unpunctured, mess.

I suppose it's good to know that Excedrin's packaging is not only childproof but also pigproof. Yet how should the Invaded Guest respond? Should he (a) keep silent; (b) mildly complain, i.e., snitch on the pig; or (c) mildly apologize for some indefinable guestly failing? Emily Post was no help; indeed, her whole section on pets has all to do with ownership and training, as if animals were recalcitrant minor human beings, needing to be educated in Etiquette. She fails to treat the equally valid matter of how a guest should respond to provocation by his or her host's pets. Most of us have experienced the damp canine nose heading for the wrong place, the feline claws clenching and unclenching on the groin area, the goat or rabbit with a hunger for shoelaces.

Eventually, pitching my tone to one of wryly objective reportage, I mentioned the porcine raid on my bedroom. I think, deep down, I was expecting some sort of—well, apology. *Wrong!* Just as parents of small children will often blame a householder for leaving anything below a height at which it can be instantly destroyed by their marauding infants, so there was a frowning implication from my hostess that I perhaps should not have left my suitcase on the floor, i.e., at feeding level. (Yes, but: this particular pig can stand on its hind legs and undo with a flick of its trotter the rubber bands supposedly holding food-cupboard doors closed, so the only truly safe place for my suitcase would have been glued to the ceiling.) Happily, my breach of etiquette

was judged venial; or, at least, comparative. I subsequently learned that an earlier guest—an Englishman, too, and one of the politest men I know—had been negligent in exactly the same way. He, to his shame, had large quantities of prescription drugs in his suitcase, in non-pigproof containers. Apparently, the effects of pharmaceutical overload on the porcine digestive system are spectacular, and not quickly over, either. Despite profuse apologies from my fellow-countryman, our hostess refused to speak to him for several days.

I didn't really expect guidance on such a matter from Emily Post. Her advice varies from the schoolmistressy ("Small boys in fast food restaurants may keep their caps on"), through the practical, if recherché (Never give a Chinese businessman a present of a green hat unless deliberately indicating that he is a cuckold), to the frankly unnecessary ("Both first and business class tickets are more expensive than coach"); but she tends to fall silent when things get a little extreme, when her delicate and decent view of how the world is, or should be, is disregarded. If you think about the average Western adolescent's etiquette requirements as the

SITE-SPECIFIC

The fact that the artist Ann Hamilton works outside traditional genres, in the nebulous realm of installation art, hasn't prevented her from enjoying official recognition. A recipient of a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, Hamilton recently scored another coup: she was chosen to represent the United States at the forty-eighth Venice Biennale this year. The artist's latest installation, "Whitecloth," is on view at the Aldrich Museum, in Ridgefield, Connecticut, through May 23rd. Exploiting the disjunction between the museum's history as a Colonial New England home and its modern, spare exhibition spaces, Hamilton has made sculptures that evoke what she calls "phantom presences": a slowly rotating floor, a wall that seems to weep as water trickles down, and the white cloth itself, which appears to levitate above a table, as if at a séance.

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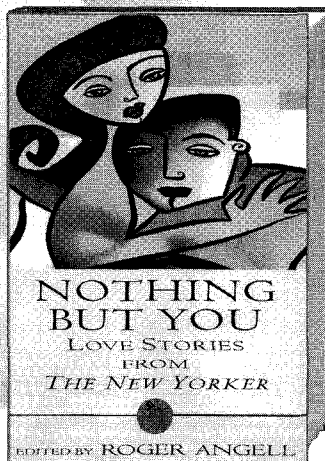
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millennium turns, then the correct use of escargot tongs is unlikely to be high on the agenda. Alcohol, sex, and drugs are probably greater sources of behavioral anxiety than the acceptable choice of flatware and the proper way to eat a banana (not the same way in a restaurant as at home, you should be warned). How to buy a round of drinks and whom to include; when, exactly, a girl should mention condoms; how many tokes to take on a joint; and how not to show disrespect to your neighborhood drug dealer—these are perhaps matters closer to the heart of the rising generation. America has more privately owned firearms than heads of household, but Emily Post is less interested in gun law than in gum lore. Three separate entries condemn the social criminality of public chewing and the compounding offense of throwing the residue down on the sidewalk where good folks might step in it.

ETIQUETTE books may appear to be about the most useful and specifically targeted items you can buy between covers, but they aren't really that at all. For a start, it's clear that the people who most need them—like my thanatophilic New York cabbie—are the least likely to read them. Thus there seems to be zero demographic overlap between users of cellular phones and readers of Emily Post. (The offense against civility has to do not just with volume and public self-importance but also with boringness. Has anyone ever overheard an interesting call made on a cellular phone?) And the reverse is also true: that people who buy etiquette books are ipso facto interested in behaving courteously and correctly, and therefore are more likely to do so and therefore not to need the books in the first place.

All right, these people may still have to verify the correct—or normal, or unoffending—way to lay out a business letter, or whether recorded music is acceptable at a home funeral, or whether the Secretary of Transportation takes precedence over the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (guess). But more and more they will be offered a choice of possible behaviors. America has long since ceased to be a version of England (so has England, for that matter); in modern America, which is com-

mittedly pluralistic and lushly devoted to self-fulfillment, even the gravest rituals of life may be celebrated in different ways with equal correctness. You may have decided upon what Post terms "A Very Small Wedding," but even smallness is bifurcated nowadays: "At such a marriage the bride rarely wears a white wedding dress and veil, but it is entirely proper for her to do so if she chooses."

Etiquette is not about life but about creating a simulacrum of life; and manuals of etiquette, even in their democratized, multiple-choice manifestations, have a similar essential unreality. The Book of Life, being nonfictional, always ends in death, whereas the Book of Etiquette, being pastoral or romance, ends in marriage. For all its appearance of diurnal helpfulness, its underlying function is to offer an ideal vision of the world: suburban, prelapsarian, pre-Cheever—a world of serious light comedy in which James Stewart always wears his hat at just that angle. Here perfect manners are not merely attainable but routine; it is as if society and nature have become one. Here the nuclear family survives and prospers; her pain, divorce, un-Biblical sexual preference, and death are all acknowledged but are accommodated by being made part of a wider pattern of good behavior. We live fairly, we die properly, and if the etiquettists are ahead of the metaphysical game the first post-Resurrection gift to be pressed into our hands will be Emily Post's "How-T in Heaven."

Returning home, I wondered what etiquette traps to lay for visiting American friends in the future. *The New Statesman* weekend competition used to invite readers to invent misleading advice for tourists: "Try the famous echo in the British Museum Reading Room" and "Parking is made easier if you remember that a single yellow line permits single parking while a double yellow line permits double parking"—that sort of thing. No, this is perhaps too cruel. Will not let Emily Post do the work herself with her paragraph of tips for business travellers setting foot in our distant islands? "People should be addressed formally, by title, and physical contact is a minimum." Well, sort of. "Do not ask personal questions, even if well intended." Hmm. "Respect is always shown to the Royal family, includi-

standing for 'God Save the Queen [King]' and in conversation, should the subject arise." "Often business is conducted during afternoon tea. . . . Eat with delicacy—even small, finger sandwiches are to be eaten in small bites, never popped in their entirety into the mouth." I always said you could spot

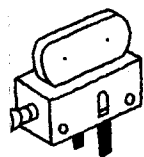
Americans a mile off: cold, standoffish folks who neurotically bite even the smallest sandwich in half and leap to their feet at the first mention of the Royal Family. Don't like to be touched, either, or to talk about personal matters. Sad, really. A fine people, in many ways, but they do need to loosen up a little. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

SOUTHERN COMFORT

Irresistible ensembles in a Mississippi town and a Catskills bungalow colony.

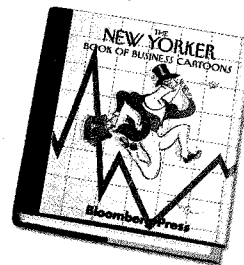
BY DAVID DENBY



THERE'S a lonely ghost in Robert Altman's new movie, "Cookie's Fortune"—or, at least, what seems to be a lonely ghost. The invisible creature, who lives in a Mississippi mansion, slyly swings open the door of a gun cabinet now and then, almost as if it were offering a weapon to the old lady, Mae (Cookie) Orcutt, who also lives in the house. Cookie very much longs to join her dead husband, Buck, and when she points one of the guns at herself, few moviegoers are likely to think that she is doing wrong, or that

the importuning ghost—Buck's ghost, of course—has displayed a malevolent spirit. One hesitates to use the cliché "autumnal" to describe the work of so ornery a filmmaker as Robert Altman, but certainly "Cookie's Fortune" shows an unusual degree of relaxation and a remarkable affection for its characters, even for its eager poltergeist. Altman's habitual malice hasn't disappeared, exactly, but it has been turned to play. "Cookie's Fortune" might be described as a Southern Gothic comedy on the themes of greed and loyalty. The screenwriter, Anne Rapp, draws on Flannery O'Connor, and perhaps on

Very funny
business, indeed!



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"Let's focus on what we do best—eating out."

Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote, but she has a glancing, rather frivolous touch that's perfect for movies. She provides a classically structured script, complete with a mansion up for grabs and true and false heirs, and at the same time she leaves Altman plenty of room to fool around in. "Cookie's Fortune" is a small miracle—an ensemble piece in which all the most deeply planted structural elements seem to have been discovered on the spot.

Altman has made many ensemble films before, with mixed results. There have been the masterpieces, or near-masterpieces, like "McCabe & Mrs. Miller" and "The Player," and there have been accomplished but sour-spirited movies, like "A Wedding" and

"Short Cuts," in which Altman seemed not only angry but angry in a dry and obsessive way, as if he had a grudge to work off against his characters. Altman's methods have always been risky; he has never depended on routine exposition or obvious script-conference strategies. He prefers, instead, to set his stories within a small, fixed society in which people are held together by little hostilities or sympathies and private jokes. His people know one another. When the method doesn't work, each character seems trapped by a nagging *idée fixe*—a set of minor preoccupations that are no more than the sum of Altman's reductive view of the character. Perhaps the reason that "Cookie's Fortune" feels so sweet is that Altman,

buoyed by the solid structure of Rapp's screenplay, doesn't feel the need to pull everything out of the actors on his own.

Together, Altman and Rapp have given the movie an irresistibly companionable spirit. Cookie, played by that drawling, sexy septuagenarian Patricia Neal, talks to herself and to her dead husband, but she isn't alone. She lives with Willis (Charles Dutton), a hard-drinking but amiable black man, who is mysteriously close to the old lady; he's certainly more than an employee, perhaps more than a friend. Willis brought up Cookie's grandniece Emma (Liv Tyler), a misbehaving but big-hearted girl, whose free-and-easy ways alienate her from her dim mother, Cora (Julianne Moore), and Cora's dominating and scheming older sister, Camille (Glenn Close). These two mad, evil siblings are Cookie's nieces and expect to inherit her fortune. When Cookie dies, Camille, racing around the house like a wet hen, rearranging, reconstructing (it wouldn't take a Sherlock Holmes to see through her designs) makes the suicide look like murder and allows suspicion to fall on Willis.

The mossy, half-empty Mississippi town is the ultimate Altman milieu. The place works like the kind of happy quarrelsome extended family in which people have put up with one another's foibles for decades. Thrown into jail Willis sits around playing Scrabble with the cops and with young Emma, who out of loyalty, refuses to leave his cell. The movie turns into a kind of slow motion detective story, in which the central mystery is the identity of the person who will receive Cookie's house and jewels. Fishing is the main preoccupation in the town, and "Cookie Fortune" has an angler's natural tempo—measured, patient, with sudden, thrashing moments of crisis. Most of the thrashing is provided by crazy Camille, who, like one of Tennessee Williams's forlorn creations, clings desperately to an old ideal of Southern gentility. She can't get into the relaxed accepting spirit of a place where the lives of white and black people are tangled together and a girl like Emma who enjoys sex and doesn't pray, can still be a good person. Glenn Close turns Camille into a fabulous harpy: the vulture-nosed, clawing performance the broadest she's ever given in movies and the funniest. As the dull sister

Cora, Julianne Moore, with her soft face and intentionally droning voice, makes a perfect foil for Close. The two women, it turns out, are putting on an Easter pageant—of all things, Oscar Wilde's "Salomé," with Cora as the vamp who demands the head of John the Baptist. The theatrical production, cast with flat-voiced townspeople, comes across as an affectionate Altmanesque parody of ineptitude—a lame version of the ensemble work that the great director does at his best. Cora, with her washed-out manner, is certainly the most boring Salomé in the history of the theatre. But in the end she has her triumph: she gets the head she wants on a platter.

[N "A Walk on the Moon," which is set in the summer of 1969—Woodstock summer—a couple of grown hippies invade a Catskills bungalow colony, suck off their clothes, and scandalously jump into a family swimming hole. The actor Tony Goldwyn, directing his first film, allows this intrusion to last no more than a few seconds, but it's a mark of his evenhanded intelligence that one immediately understands why the hippie peek-out is both funny and a genuine treat. In the colony, lower-middle-class wish families have gathered to protect one another: the men are away, working in New York from Monday to Friday, and the wives, children, and grandparents who remain are comforted by the routines of the camp and by long-grained habits of excessive caution—the class and tribal inheritance that anticipates catastrophe in every passing sound or dropped pair of pants. Goldwyn, working with a fine screenplay by Pamela Gray, captures that moment when the rather straitened moral world of the Jews at the camp is beginning to open up. Having married young—too young—these strivers from Brooklyn or the Bronx settled early into work and child-rearing, and now, as the culture around them changes, they feel bereft. One of the young wives and mothers, beautiful Pearl Kantrowitz (Diane Lane), is convinced that she lost an entire decade to mah-jongg and Walden's. When a good-looking stranger (Viggo Mortensen) passes through the colony, Pearl begins an affair with him and turns her life upside down.

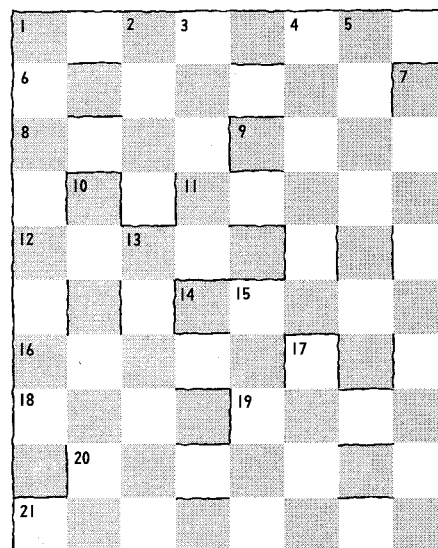
The picture is not much more, I suppose, than a standard triangle drama,

but the Catskills setting carries a special charm and interest. Goldwyn and Gray show us that the cloying yenta alarmism keeps away loneliness and despair—but also makes young people feel as if they were locked in prison. One reason that Viggo Mortensen is so appealing to Diane Lane's bored housewife is that he's an outsider, a golden-haired Gentile hipster who doesn't much worry about anything. Mortensen has the kind of relaxed sensual attraction that Kris Kristofferson brought to movies twenty-five years ago: a troubled woman feels she can let go with him because he has no anxieties of his own. Lane, who was famous in the early eighties as a teen-age femme fatale (she was the Christina Ricci of her day), plays Pearl with a hard set to her face and a slight tremor in her voice, which suggests both desperation and guilt. Her Pearl isn't sure she has the right to be dissatisfied. After all, her perfectly decent husband, Marty (Liev Schreiber), gave up his dreams of college and a career in engineering in order to earn a living as a TV repairman. The snub-nosed Schreiber, who may be a major talent, is ferrety and apprehensive, as if someone were about to pass judgment on him; he has the grim, fatalistic wit of the hitched-to-the-plow Jewish husbands and workers of an earlier era. Poor Marty is baffled by what his wife wants. When he was growing up, no one in his neighborhood ever told him that sensuality was meant to be part of a man's equipment.

Goldwyn works very straightforwardly for the most complicated emotional truth he can wring from a relatively simple dramatic framework. Alison (Anna Paquin), Pearl's teen-age daughter, fooling around with her first boyfriend, becomes outraged when her mom begins going through an adolescent phase of her own. At the climax of the picture, mother and daughter, each unbeknownst to the other, manage to slip away from the colony, boyfriends in tow, and make their way to the Woodstock Festival. Adrift in the enormous crowd, Alison is shocked by an unbelievable vision: her mother, bare-breasted and painted with Day-Glo, being swung about in her lover's arms in the sunshine. "A Walk on the Moon" doesn't take enormous chances, but it's extremely satisfying—and, in this one moment, overwhelming. ♦

8x10 CRYPTIC

NO. 84 BY FRASER SIMPSON



ACROSS

- 1 Detroit players develop new grids (3,5)
- 6 Endless hassle ultimately with rental buggy (7)
- 8 Note two postal abbreviations that begin with M (4)
- 9 Rainbow fish is free of fourth fishing line (4)
- 11 Tender translation of runes (5)
- 12 Have a rule fall to the auditor (5)
- 14 Some ephemera were less polished (5)
- 16 Finer sort of room in back (5)
- 18 Attract minor returns (4)
- 19 Eucalyptus tree frames a place in the Marianas (4)
- 20 Baltic country slipping into sea (7)
- 21 He said, "No high sticking" (8)

DOWN

- 1 Artist Bertrand goes wild about medium (9)
- 2 Almost relinquish Patrick's co-star in "Ghost" (4)
- 3 Bananas grown incorrectly (5)
- 4 Thin nose on the front missile (6)
- 5 Explains lip cosmetics (7)
- 7 Guy at the helm tenses arm awkwardly (9)
- 10 No longer working, like a car with new wheels? (7)
- 13 One way to pay Peruvians heading for home (2,4)
- 15 Rival of Corinth taking part in wars after the first (5)
- 17 Actor Paul flipped over number one (4)

The solution to puzzle No. 83 appears on page 51. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.

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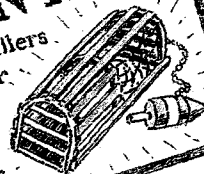
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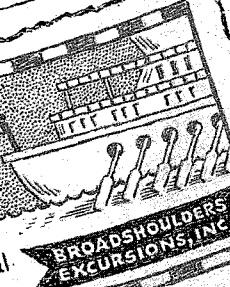


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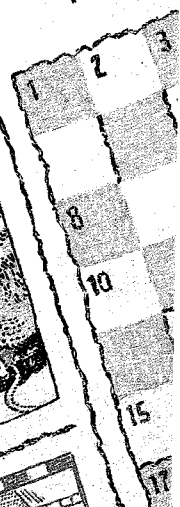
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